



BRIDGWATER. RELIGIO BIBLIOPOLÆ.











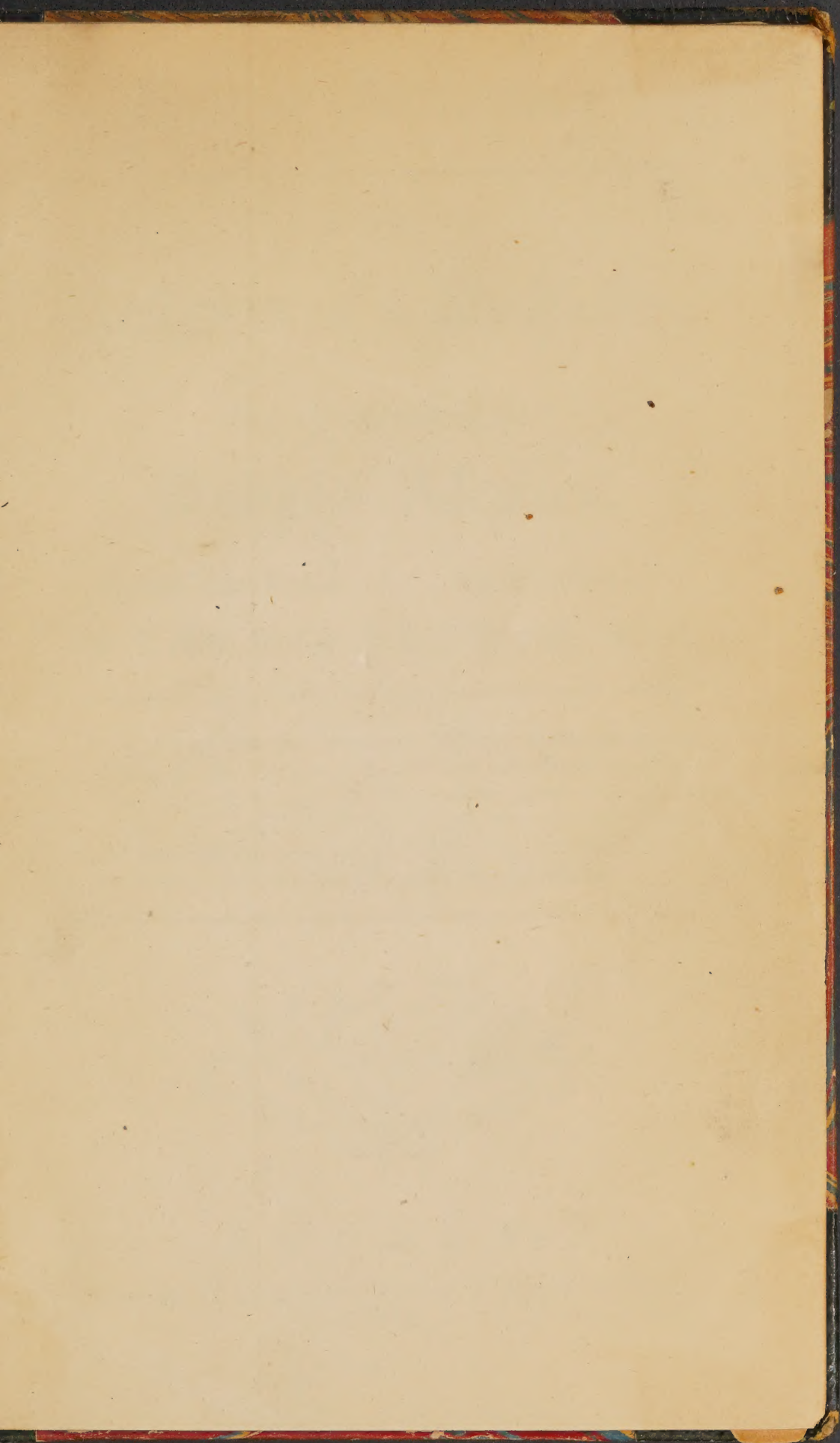
828

D927

1780

R.B 12-4<sup>th</sup>







I. Duntun, John.



# *Religio Bibliopolæ.*

---

T H E

## Religion of a *Bookseller.*

After the Manner of the

### *Religio Medici,*

By the Late INGENIOUS and LEARNED

Sir THOMAS BROWNE, M.D.

---

*As the greatest and most universal Mischief Mankind suffers under, is the Delusion of a false and unrectified Imagination, it is the Business of this excellent Author to enable us to make a true Estimate of Things, that we may become our own Masters, and use the Faculties we are endued with, to the Ends and Purposes for which they are intended.*

---



L O N D O N :

Printed for C. CORBETT, opposite St. Dunstan's Church,  
Fleet-Street. [Price 1 s. 6 d.]

[1780]



Religio Bibliopola.

THE

Religion of a Book/eller.

After the Manner of the

Religio Medicis

By the Late Ingenious and Learned

ST. THOMAS BROWNE, M.D.

2648

At the request of the Author, the following Preface  
was written by the Librarian of the British Museum  
in 1753, at the request of the Council, that the  
manuscript might be printed, and the work  
be published, and the Council have been  
pleased to order that the same should be  
printed, and the work be published.

LONDON:  
Printed by C. Dilly, in Strand, near St. Dunstons Church.  
[Price 1s. 6d.]





# P R E F A C E.



*THE* peculiar Air and Style of the following Treatise, the obvious and easy Method pursued, the bold and intelligible Notions inculcated, and that Spirit of Life and Vigour conspicuous through the Whole, must needs recommend it to the Taste of the present Age.

Such Prejudices do we labour under, and so irregular and monstrous are our Conceptions of Things, that but to attempt our Delivery, and set us free from that slavish Power of Custom and Education, wherewith we are so miserably involved, merits no small Commendation; but to clear our dim Sight, to take the Film from our Eyes, and place us in the open Sunshine of Reason, and true Judgment; to acquaint us with the Prerogative of our own Understandings, and the due Liberty and Freedom of using them, is an Atchievement that exacts the highest Applause and Gratitude from the better and nobler Part of Mankind.

Our excellent Author has enabled us to make a true Estimate of Things, to divest them of all those foreign and specious Accoutrements, with which Error and Mistake have cloathed them. We here see Things in their own native and naked Forms, and are able to reduce them to their true and intrinsick Worth and Value.

The

The greatest and most universal Mischief Mankind suffers under, is the Delusion of a false and unrectified Imagination. This is an Error in the first Concoction, and gives a Tincture to all our Judgments, and a Bias to all the Actions of our Lives; the very Ground and Cause of all our Miscarriages. We derive false Conceptions from our Cradles, and suck it in with our Mothers Milk: Our Nurses destroy us in our very Infancy with their Tattle and Impertinence, which root themselves so deeply in the Fanny, that we hardly ever disengage ourselves from them all our Life after. Hence we contract a Habit of Laziness, and become fitly disposed to take Things upon Trust and Reputation, to save the Charge of a little Examination and Study: The Spring and Rise of all our late Repentance and Vexation.

Now the Business of this Author is to instruct us how to become our own Masters, and to make use of the Faculties our Creator has endued us with, to those Ends and Purposes for which they were intended.

The principal Subject of the Whole is purely disputable, as being for the most Part Matter of Opinion; wherein it has ever been lawful to take which Side we please: And when he sometimes ventures upon Mysteries of an higher Nature, it is done with that Reverence and Tendernefs, as may render him therein, at least excusable; and however dogmatical the Expression may appear, the Design is wholly an Essay and Experiment, not an arbitrary and decisive Sentence in those Matters.

I shall detain the Reader's Impatience no longer, not in the least doubting but his Consent to, and Approbation of this Treatise, will be a sufficient Justification of the Author, and his Attempt.





## RELIGIO BIBLIOPOLÆ.



THOUGH Trades, as well as Nations, have Scandals fastened upon them in the Lump, yet there are some in all Professions to whom the abusive Character is not due. *Booksellers* in the Gross are taken for little better than a Pack of *Knaves* and *Atheists*; (though, Thanks to our few *Kindred* among the Stars, it is only by prejudiced Men;) yet among them there is a Retail of Men who are no Strangers to *Religion* and *Honesty*. I, that am one of that Calling, am bold to challenge the Title of a *Christian*, neither am I ashamed to expose my *Morals*.

I have no Reason to tax my *Education*, or blame those who had the Care of my *juvenile Years*. My *Tutors* were learned and orthodox, and made it their Business to *form my Mind*, and *square my Soul*, by the best Precepts and purest Examples; yet, when I arrived at Years of maturer Judgment, I found Occasion to prune myself, and lop off many Excrescencies, to wipe out the early Impressions of my Infant Years, and unlearn the *Notions* I sucked in with my *Mother's Milk*. Though there were

no *Legends* in the Nursery, nor *Heresies* in the Schools where I was brought up, yet my blooming *Fancy* was fertile in *Errors*, and sprouted forth in many *luxuriant Thoughts*; it was the Task of my riper Judgment to correct these, and reduce myself to the Standard of *Reason* and *Faith*.

Having therefore got the Weather-Gage of *youthful Mistakes* by diligent Scrutinies and proper Remarks, having put in the Balance and weighed my *native Religion* with all others that are extant, I now make that the Object of my *Choice* which before was only the Effect of *Prepossession*; and as I was lifted a *Soldier* of *Christ* in my *Baptism*, so now I declare myself a *Volunteer* in his *Service*: What was then done without my *Knowledge*, I now ratify by my free *Consent*; and I resolve not to change my *Banner* as long as I live.

It is no *Solecism* in Divinity to say, that the *Prince of Peace* is the *Lord of Hosts*. The *Church Militant* is his *Army*, composed of many *Battalions*, in different *Posts*, and under various *Orders*. So long as they all serve the great *Captain* of their Salvation, and practice well the Discipline of their Arms, I refuse not to give the Word of *Peace* to any, let him be of what *Company* or *Troop* soever. The *Variety* which we behold in the Universe is not its Deformity, but its Beauty. As the Eye is more *ravished* with a *Landskip* which invites it with the grateful Interpositions of Hills and Vallies, Woods and champian Grounds, than if it were let out to lose itself in the *Uniformity* of a waste Horizon or *empty Prospect*, so is the truly *pious Soul* more surpris'd with the Glory of the Christian Religion, when various Apprehensions agree in the same *substantial Holiness*; *one Star differing from another in Glory*, yet all shining with a Light borrowed from the same *Fountain*. And doubtless he is the Man who is most likely to be a Member of the *Church*

Tri-



*Triumphant*, who cordially embraces with the extended Arms of Good-will, who ever are dignified with the Image of Piety, though not distinguished with his own *Superscription*.

I profess myself an impartial Lover of all good Men, and do presume every Man to be good till I find him otherwise. I have as little Zeal about Things that are manifestly indifferent, either *pro* or *con*, as any Man in the World ; for it is a Principle I received from my Education, that the real Differences of good and intelligent People are not so wide as they seem, and that through Prejudice and Interest they many Times contest about Words, whilst they heartily think the same Thing.

I am not fond of the Names which distinguish one Party from another in the *Church*. I esteem not a Man the better for being regimented in this *Communion*, rather than in that ; and, for ought I know, in the *Camp of God* a *Reformed* may be as acceptable as in those of Men. However, a Mutineer in either, is odious ; and to raise *Factions* about *Religion*, is to adore *Mars* instead of *Christ*, and to commence a War for the Sake of Peace. I cannot approve of their bitter *Zeal*, who, if they cannot call down Fire from *Heaven*, will kindle it on the *Earth* against all that think not as they do. He is an ill Disputant for Christianity, who uses no other Topicks than Gun-powder and Steel. *The Logick of Mahomet becomes not a Disciple of Jesus* ; and I should make but an hypocritical Convert, were I to be *dragooned* into *Religion* by the domineering Arguments of *booted Apostles*.

To perswade to Conformity by Prisons and Confiscations, is, in my Apprehension, something like demonstrating a Proposition in *Euclid*, or apologizing by a Beetle and Wedges ; and I conceive they will equally produce their Effects ; when any *Mathemati-*

*cian* shall do the one, the *Spiritual Court* may perform the other. We find few edified by a Dungeon, or instructed by the spoiling of their Goods. *Force* hath as little Power on Souls as a Surgeon's Knife on the Understanding and Affections of Men: *Remedies* must have some Analogy with the Sick and their Diseases. It is sound Reason (which is of our Essence and Constitution) with some little Intermixtures of Kindness and Love, that must make Men Proselytes to the Church of *England*, or nothing.

The Use I make of this Variety in *Religions* is far different: *Truth* is *homogenous*, and attracts to itself all that is of its own *Nature*, wheresoever dispersed or separated, rejecting the rest as not pertaining to it. Thus I, overlooking the *Errors* and *Mistakes* of those who differ from me, at the same Time embrace their *orthodox Tenets*, and shunning their *Vices*, I imitate their *Virtues*. This is to take Things by the right Handle, and like the *Bee* to suck *Honey* out of every Weed. It is of the *Nature* of the *Sun*, who has Commerce with many Pollutions, yet remains himself undefiled.

I abhor that mercenary Course of joining myself with any *Party* of *Christians* that is uppermost, to abet the prevailing *Faction*, and assert the Opinions most in Fashion. This is to be a Weathercock in *Religion*, pliable to every fresh Gale of *Interest*. Neither, on the other Side, do I think it good Manners or Prudence to affront the *Religion* of the *State*, and, by a saucy Impertinence, condemn those who worship *God* in the Manner prescribed by the *Laws* of the Land. In my *Travels* I learned this *Moderation*; and he that knows not how to practice it, is not fit to stir out of his Chimney Corner. *Religion* does not authorize *Rudeness*, neither is *Arrogance* compatible with *Devotion*. It is difficult to find a Company of four or five Men together, where there is not at least a *Triumvirate* of *Religions*; and he that  
will



will set up for a *Dictator* among them, shall have all their Forces united against himself.

I do not value any Man's *Religion* by his starched Looks or *supercilious Gravity*. I hate to put on an unfociable Face, or screw myself into an ill-humoured *Riddle*. I do not angle for the *Character* of a *Saint*, by magisterially declaiming against the *innocent Diversions* of human Life, and ranking Things indifferent among the greatest Crimes. Above all, I cannot approve of those who are prone to fasten *God's Judgments* on particular *Occasions*, as if they alone could unlock the Secrets of the Almighty, and were the Privy-Counsellors of Heaven. No Man's *Misfortune* shall escape their *Censure*; but forgetting what our Saviour said of those on whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell, they condemn all alike, and presume to distribute the *Divine Justice* by their own false *Weights* and *Measures*. I am in Love with that Saying of *Plato*, *There is no Envy in the Deity*. Assuredly that Immense Ocean of Goodness never ceases to shower down his Favours and Blessings on all that are capable of receiving them, and he is not partial to any of his *Creatures*. Like the *Sun* he imparts his Influence to all the *World*; and if any rejoice not in his *Beams*, the *Cloud* that hinders them is of their own raising. Those Men will hardly proselyte me who dress the *Deity* in a frightful *Figure*, and then would persuade the World it is his *essential Complexion*. While they exclaim against *Pictures* and *Images*, they themselves commit *Idolatry*: They set up an infinite Tyrant, morose, arbitrary, and cruel, instead of the Original, Increated Beauty and Goodness, worshipping the *Idol* of their own Imagination, instead of the indulgent Father of all Things.

I do not take Prayer to consist in babbling over the devoutest *Collects* and *Oraisons* of the Church, without a due *Application of Spirit*. This is the *Sacrifice*

*crifice* of Fools, without *Salt* or *Fire*, and therefore must needs be unfavory to *God*. The bended Knee, submissive Looks, and even a Body prostrate to the Ground, unless accompanied with a proportionate *Fervour* and *Humility* of the *Soul*, are but Religious *Compliments*, and a pious *Banter*. Such Mock-Addresses, I doubt, are but ungraciously received in the Court of *Heaven*.

An equal Dislike I have for those who offer up strange and unhallowed Flames, burning Incense, whose *Composition* is not warrantable; who hold not fast the *Form* of sound Words, but giving the Reigns to their *Tongue*, suffer it to commit a thousand Indecencies in the hearing of him who made the Ear. These, as well as the former, are guilty of *Crimen læsæ Majestatis*, while they affront *Heaven* with *Tautologies* and vain *Repetitions*; the one through Inadvertency, the other through Presumption; this bringing *Form* without *Matter*, that offering *Matter* without *Form*, and both wanting the *Spirit* and *Life* of sincere Devotion. Yet I neither censure such as use an *allowable Form*, provided it be accompanied with attentive Devotion; and less those who address themselves to *Heaven* in *Words of their own chusing*, provided it be seasoned with Discretion, and a modest Sobriety of Spirit: For when a Man fitly qualified, endowed with Learning, and, above all, *adorned with a good Life*, breaks out into a warm and well delivered Prayer before his Sermon, it hath the Appearance of a divine Rapture; he raises and leads the Hearts of the Assembly in another Manner than the most composed or best studied Form of Words can ever do; and the *Preachers*, who serve up all the Sermon with the same Garnishing, would look like so many Statues or Men of Straw in the Pulpit, compared with those who speak with such a powerful Zeal, that Men are tempted at the  
Moment



Moment to believe *Heaven* itself hath directed their Words to them.

On the other Side, I think not *that* to be the only authentick *Prayer*, which is attended with sensual Raptures and melting Entertainments: This is but the Smoak of Passion, and soon vanishes; a mere Vapour or Ebullition, a pleasing Warmth of the Imagination, and frequently the proper Result of a sanguine *Complexion*.

*Prayer is the Exaltation of the Soul, the Flight of a sublimated Spirit; it makes Man an Angel pro Tempore, while his abstracted Mind takes the Wing, and soars aloft, hovering on the Borders of Paradise: He then breathes immortal Airs, burns like a Seraphim, and flames out with pure and holy Fires, like the most extasied Orders of the celestial Court.*

For my own Part, I can pray kneeling, standing, or sitting, either at my Business or at my Repast, with or without Words or Ceremonies; and this I take to be the only Method of complying with St. *Paul's* Counsel, when he bids us *pray without ceasing*. A swift and pious *Ejaculation* many Times does the Office of a *Multitude of Words*, tho' the most apposite and elegant in human Language, since *God* understands the *Dialect* of the *Heart* as well as that of the *Tongue*, being the Architect of both.

The Posture which *Pythagoras* enjoined his Disciples, when they appeared before the *Gods*, was not without a *Mystery*; he bid them hold their Tongues reversed, intimating thereby, that they should observe a devout *Silence* in such tremendous Company, and utter no Words which were not dipt in the *Heart*. And I could wish the Advice of *Solomon*, instead of a *Nosce Teipsum*, was engraven on the *Frontispiece* of our *Churches*: "My Son, when  
" thou enterest the House of God, let thy Words be  
" few, and be more ready to hear than to offer the  
" *Sacrifice of Fools.*" In all this I aim at a *Devotion*  
that

that is masculine and solid, discreet and humble, sincere and modest, full of *primitive Reverence* and the *Fervour* of the first Ages.

In proper speaking our very silent Necessities are eloquent *Prayers*, and the Wants which are hardest to be uttered, are such a prevailing *Rhetorick with God*, as oft-times bring down swifter Relief from *Heaven*, than our loudest *Litanies*. Even we ourselves are more apt to dispose of our Alms to a dumb Person, who, by being disabled to make his Addresses *any other Ways* than by mute Signs, does by that pathetick Kind of *Complaint* challenge our *Charity*, than to the common Beggars, who make a Trade of haranguing People out of their *Money*. Indeed, every innocent *Action* of our Lives is a *Prayer*; but the more extraordinary Performances of *heroick Virtue* pierce the Clouds, storm the Regions above, and plunder *Heaven* itself, if I may so speak, of its choicest *Blessings*.

As to *publick Prayer*, I own there is a Necessity of using some *Forms* and *Ceremonies*; and those are the best which have the greatest Efficacy to excite and regulate our *Devotion*: Not too pompous and theatrical, nor slovenly and mean, but such as become the *House of God*, and give it an external *Beauty*, not a mere *Pageantry* of *Holiness*.

That Custom of the *Greek*, and other *Eastern Churches*, to separate the Men from the Women in the publick Assembly, seems to have something of *Antiquity* for its Plea, though the Disuse of it in these Western Parts may make us think it a *Singularity*. I envy not that Sex the Liberty of Worshipping God, and being present at the *publick Solemnities*; yet I grudge them a Privilege which is so manifest an Impediment to our *Devotion*, as is their prating over the *Psalms*, *Responses*, and other Portions of the *Common-Prayer*. I could stand beside the fairest of that Sex in the *Church* unmoved



as Marble, their brightest Charms serving but as *Foils* to set off the incomparable Eminency of that *Majesty* and *Glory* who is adored in that Place. But when I hear them break the Bounds of *female Modesty*, whose greatest Ornament is *Silence*; when I hear their Tongues running over the *Prayers* as loud, if not louder than the Men, either with a careless Wantonness, or affected Gravity, their Eyes divided betwixt an amorous Glance and a devout Ogle; this, I must confess, gives me Offence; it is an Obstacle to my Devotion, and makes me think the *Grecians* are not without Reason in assigning a particular Place of the *Church* to the *Women*, where they can neither be seen or heard. And this will not seem uncourtly or austere, if we remember that St. *Paul* himself has said, I permit not a *Woman* to speak in the *Church*. And in another Place, Let Women have Power on their Heads that is, be covered or veiled because of the Angels, or, as some interpret it, because of the young Men.

I wish for a purer *Reformation* in the *Church* than we have hitherto seen; yet I am not for tearing up *Christianity* by the Roots. I could be glad to see the *House of God* purged and cleansed, the Building repaired and beautified without removing it from the *Foundations*. The Office of a *Bishop* and a *Presbyter*, to me, seems no other Ways differenced than thus; I look upon a *Presbyter* as a *Parochial Bishop*, and a *Bishop* as a *Diocesan Presbyter*; their Dignity equal in *Quality*, though not in *Quantity*, the one has Power of administering the *Sacraments* as well as the other; only for the Sake of *Order* and good *Government* in the *Church*, one is invested with a *Jurisdiction* and *Superiority*, of which the other is as capable, if duly elected to it.

I envy not the *Bishops* or *ruling Presbyters* their Temporal Honours and Riches, neither would I be a Leveller in the *Church of God*; yet it were a de-

sirable Thing, if there were a more equal Distribution of ecclesiastical Benefices, that the poorest *preaching Presbyter* might have an Income that should free him from the Temptation of envying a *Journeyman Carter*, and other inferior Trades, who many Times can boast of a larger Stipend than some of the *Ministry*.

*Pluralities* and *Non-Residents* were never heard of in the Primitive Ages, and it is a Shame there should be so many fat *Parsonages*, and yet so many *lean Parsons*. It is the Devil's Market where Church-Livings are bought and sold, and such *spiritual Hucksters* deserve to be whipt out of the *Temple*.

I refuse not to bow at the *Name* of *Jesus*, yet can give no Reason why I should not as well bow at the *Name* of *Joshua*, they being both one and the same in the *Hebrew*; and that Scripture which is made to countenance this Ceremony, seems to me to speak no more, than that in the *Name* of *Christ* all Addresses should be made to *God* the Father; for if it were to be literally taken, why do they who so receive it bow the *Head* instead of the *Knee*? Besides, I see no Reason why I should not also bow at the *Name* of *Messias*, *Christ*, *Emanuel*, since the Redeemer of the World is called by all these *Names*? Nay, why should not I pay the same Reverence to all the *Names* of *God* in all Languages, especially to that tremendous Name *Jehovah*, which the *Jews* think it unlawful to utter. It is true indeed, I can comply with the Custom of the *Church* in a Thing not directly opposite to any positive Command, but I protest at the same Time my Wishes are, that a Custom acknowledged to be indifferent, even by those who most zealously plead for its Practice, were rather disused than imposed on Men of tender Consciences, since it gives so much Scandal, and has no *Authority* but that of *Tradition* to back it.

I am



I am naturally a Lover of *Musick*, and believe it has an Efficacy in composing or ruffling the Spirits, according to the various Kinds of it; but I find its most immediate Operation is on the *Fancy* and sensual Affections, not on the *superior Faculties* of the *Soul*; and therefore I see no Use of it in the *Church*, where we come not to pay Homage to *God* in the Strength of an exalted Imagination, or to present him with the *First-Fruits* of our *Passions*, though never so refined, but to offer up ourselves a *living Sacrifice*, which is our rational Service, since *God* is to be worshipped in *Spirit* and *Truth*, and not with airy *Notions*, and carnal Raptures.

Though the *Ear* is a Member consecrated to the Service of *Religion*, since *Faith* comes by *hearing*, yet I cannot observe that my *Faith* is at any Time encreased by the most harmonious Lessons on the *Organ*, or other Instruments of *Musick* used in Divine Service. Neither do I admire at the Countryman's Freak, who, the first Time he had ever been in a Cathedral, hearing the *Organ* strike up, fell a dancing, as though he had been in a *Musick-House*. To speak freely, I know not why we may not praise *God* as acceptably in a *Dance* as with *Musick*, since the *Jews*, from whom we borrow our Arguments for the latter, did as usually practise the former; there being but little Use of the one without the other. To me a Chapter in the *Bible* is the best *Musick* in the World, and no Melody like that of a good *Sermon*, where the Preacher, like a skilful Artist, reconciles the Discords of the *Law* and the *Gospel*; and between the Emblems and Types of the one, and the substantial *Truths* and *Mysteries* of the other, strikes up such a grateful Harmony as far exceeds the best Concert in the World, though it were as charming as *Nebuchadnezzar's*, and made up of the whole Family of *Musick*.

So I am a great Admirer of good *Painting* and *Sculpture*, yet can never find them Helps, but Hindrances to my *Devotion*; since it is impossible for the greatest Master that ever professed those *Arts*, to draw or carve to the Life what was never exposed to any of his Senses, or to contrive a Figure of that which has no Resemblance, the *invisible Divinity*. Indeed a Man's own *Fancy* in such a Case is the best Painter; and if it be lawful to make Use of any *Pictures* or *Images*, it is of such as our own Imagination frames. Yet this is the Way to become *Anthropomorphites*, and worship God under the *Similitude* of a Man, or to follow the Pagan Vanities, and adore him under the Likeness of a Beast, or some other sensible *Figure*; since all the *Ideas* of that *mimick Faculty* are but the Transcripts of external Objects; *Aristotle's* Maxim being truer of this than of the *Intellect*, that there is nothing in it which was not first in the *Sense*. The only Way to have a true *Idea* of God is to suppress the Operations of this busy *Faculty*, and by withdrawing into the most inward Recess of the *Mind*, there, as in a *Mirror*, to contemplate that *infinite Essence*, who is hid behind himself, if I may so speak, and cannot be discovered but by his *Back-parts*.

It is with Pleasure that I behold him in his *Rays*, which shine in all his Works, and he has cast his *Shadow* throughout the *Universe*; but I should be oppressed with *Glory* were I capable of fixing my Eyes on that *Abyss* of *Splendors*, before which the most illustrious *Spirits* in *Heaven* cover their Faces, as if they were ashamed of their comparative Imperfections, and were not able to behold that original and uncreated *Purity* without a Blush.

I have no Ambition to become an *Eagle* in *Divinity*, neither do I emulate the towering Flights of such as pretend to extraordinary *Revelations*; I had rather walk under the *Piazas* of God's Church, than



than on the Battlements of the *Devil's Chappel*, lest my Head should grow giddy with *Enthusiasms*, and I be blown off from those Heights and Pinnacles with some Wind of vain Doctrine. That Father of the *Arian* Heresy was an *Icarus* in Religion, he had lofty Thoughts and soaring Speculations ; but he flew without a Guide, he forsook the Path of his *Mother* the Church, his Wings melted, and he had a terrible *Fall*, which at once bereft him of his *Life*, and, it is to be feared, of his *Salvation*.

I take great Pleasure sometimes to find myself entangled in *Difficulties* and *Dangers*, out of which I have no *Skill* to extricate myself. I never think myself safer than in such a *Labyrinth* of thwarting Events, as no *Clue* of my own Reason or Experience can lead me out : It is then I can be chearful and triumph, knowing my Deliverance is near at Hand ; and herein lies the *Quintessence* of my Comfort, that I am thus particularly and demonstratively assured of the divine *Favour* and *Protection*, since nothing below a *Miracle of Providence* could untie so knotty a Juncture of *Misfortunes*.

Were all the Passages of my *Life* published, it would be taken for more than a *Romance*, it is so full of Adventures, which surpass the Stories of *Giants*, *Monsters*, *enchanted Castles*, and the whole System of *Knight-Errantry* ; such strange and unexpected Escapes as I have made from the very Jaws of *Death*, exceed the Fables of *Poets* ; and had I no other Reason but the Remembrance of my own *Perils* and *Deliverances*, it were more than enough to convince me of an unerring Eye that watches over *Mankind*. This makes me chearful and easy in all human Circumstances, and reconciles me to the *Stoicks*. I look on all Things to be governed by a fixed *Law* and eternal *Destiny*, and therefore could quietly sit down with

George

George Withers, and say, *Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*. I consider myself as a *Part* of the *Universe*, and therefore am never troubled at any Thing which happens to me, since it comes not to pass without the Knowledge and Will of him who, in all his Dispensations, has Regard to the *Good* of the *Whole*, from which I am not excluded as a *Member*, and therefore must needs participate of the *common Benefit*, even when I think I suffer *Damage*. I am not peevish at a Calumny, nor waspish at a Loss. When any one does me an Injury, I take a singular Pleasure in forgiving him. There is such a noble *Pride* attends this generous Conquest of an Enemy, as far surpasses the celebrated Sweetness of *Revenge*. I hate to gratify my *Passion* the *common Way*, and because he has acted the Part of an ill Man, I must do so too, or worse, by giving Scope to my *Rage*, and executing the severest Dictates of my *Fury*. He is but a *Tinker* in *Morality*, who, to repair one Breach, makes another, and perhaps wider than the first. Besides, it is the most profitable Kind of *Revenge*, when I turn a *Wrong* to an *Advantage* by cancelling it, since thereby I make a *Friend* of an *Enemy*, and if he has but the least Spark of *Gratitude* and *Virtue*, my Benignity makes him not only blush at his Offence, but puts him upon some ingenious Study how to make me Amends.

Hath any *wrong'd* thee, says \* *Quarles*, be bravely revenged ; flight it, and the Work is begun ; forgive it, and it is finished. *He is below himself that is not above an Injury.*

If thy Brother hath privately offended thee, reprove him privately, and having lost himself in an Injury, thou shalt find him in thy Forgiveness. *He that rebukes a private Fault openly, sordidly betrays it rather than reproveth it.* The true Way to

\* See his *Enchiridion*.



advance another's Virtue is to follow it, and the best Means to cry down another's Vice is to decline it.

Have any *wounded* thee with *Slanders*? meet them with Patience; hasty Words *rankle* the Wound, soft Language dresses it, Forgiveness cures it, Oblivion takes away the Scar. It is more noble by Silence to cover an Injury, than by *Argument* to overcome or spread it. But in all Cases of this Nature change Conditions with thy Brother; then ask thy Conscience what thou wouldest be done to; being resolved, exchange again, and do thou the like to him, and thy Christianity shall never err.

I esteem it one of the most substantial Exercises of *Religion*, to subdue our *Passions*; and because *Anger* is the most violent and precipitate, I use my most strenuous Endeavours to stifle this in its *Embryo*. Other *Passions* take a gradual Rise, and insinuate by Steps, but *Wrath*, like *Gun-powder*, takes *Fire* all at once, and blows a Man up before he can look about him. Therefore I have by long and assiduous Practice laboured to get the Victory of this turbulent Affection; and I count it the *Masterpiece* of human Wit to be above all *Provocation*. I could long ago stop my Hand in the Midst of its *Career*, when aimed at a faulty Servant, or scurrilous Companion, but now I can bridle the *Nerves* which would have stretched it forth, and curb the officious *Spirits* which were so ready to sally forth on such an Occasion. I scorn to suffer my *Tongue* to be my *Hand's Deputy*, and to lavish out in unseemly Expressions, as if the Height of Man's Wit and Valour lay in a biting *Repartee*. Nay, I will not permit so much as my *Cheek* to change Colour, my *Eye* to sparkle, or any other Part of my Face to receive the least Impression of my *Resentments*, whereby it may be perceived that I am not insensible of an *Affront*, nor void of due  
Reflection

Reflection on it. All that I aim at, is to comply with the *Apostle's* Advice, *To be angry and not to sin.*

I have no pannick Fears of *Death* upon me, neither am I sollicitous how or when I shall make my *Exit* from the Stage of this *Life*. Much less do I trouble myself about the Manner of my *Burial*, or to which of the *Elements* I shall commit my *Carcase*. I envy not the *Funeral State* of Great Men, neither do I covet the *Embalming* of the *Egyptians*. I wonder at the Fancy of those who desire to be imprisoned in leaden *Coffins* till the *Resurrection*, and to protract the *Corruption* of their *Flesh*, out of which they shall be generated *de Novo*; as if they dreamt of rising whole as they lay down, and carrying *Flesh* and *Blood* into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, without a *Change*.

For my Part I admire the *Indian Obsequies*, and were it not against the long established Custom of my *Country*, would sooner bequeath my *Body* to the *Fire*, than be *inhumed*, that so I might be sooner resolved into the *Elements* of which I was first compounded.

Yet instead of that nearer Way to Dissolution, I can be contented to undergo the tedious Conversation of *Worms* and *Serpents*, those greedy *Tenants* of the *Grave*, who will never be satisfied, till they have eat up the *Ground-Landlord*.

I do not puzzle myself with projecting how my *scattered Ashes* shall be collected together, neither do I for that Reason, take Care for an *Urn* to enclose them. I am satisfied, that at the last *Trumpet* I shall rise with the same *Individual Body*, I now carry about me, though there may not then be one of the same *individual Atoms* to make it up, which are its present Ingredients. For neither are they the same now as they were twenty Years ago. Yet I may be properly said to have the same *Individual*



*vidual Body* at this Hour, which my Mother brought forth into the World, though it is manifest, that there is so vast an *Acceſſion* of other *Particles* ſince that Time, as are enow to make *Ten* ſuch *Bodies* as I had then. Which implies ſuch a perpetual *Flux* of the former, as it would be a *Solecism* in *Philosophy*, to think I have one of my *Infant Atoms* now left about me. If after all this, I may be ſtill ſaid to have the ſame *Individual Body* I had then, though there be not one of the ſame *Individual Atoms* left in its *Composition*, why may we not aſſert the ſame of the *Bodies* we ſhall have after the *Reſurrection*? *Matter* is one and the ſame in all *Bodies*, the *Individuation* of it, the *Meum* and *Tuum*, proceeds only from the Infinitely different *Forms* which actuate it. Thus when my *Soul* at the *Reſurrection*, either by its own *Energy*, or by the Power of *God*, and Aſſiſtance of *Angels*, ſhall be reinveſted with a *Body*, it is proper to ſay, it will be the ſame *Individual Body* I have now, though made up of *Atoms*, which never before were Ingredients of my *Composition*; ſince not the *Matter*, but the *Form* gives a Title to *Individuation*.

I am the more willing to believe this will be the Manner of our *Reſurrection*; becauſe I think it not decorous to put the *Angels* on the Drudgery of *Scavengers*, as if it ſhould at that Day be their Employment to ſweep the *Graves* and *Charnel-houſes*, to ſift the *Elements*, and rake in all the *Receptacles* of the *Dead*, for Mens divided *Duſt*. Not that I think it impoſſible for *God*, even this way, to accompliſh the *Reſurrection* of the *Dead*; though the *Bodies* of all Mankind were crumbled into *Duſt*, and that *Duſt* ſcattered before the *Wind*, or attenuated into *Air*; or though thoſe *Bodies* were eaten by the Beaſts of the *Earth*, or the Fiſh of the *Sea*, and thoſe Beaſts and Fiſh eaten again by Men. Though they ſhould undergo all theſe Changes and Transmigrations, yet were they ſtill in the great

Repository of *God*. The whole *World* in this Sense being but as one great *Store-house*, and all the *Elements* as so many *Cells* therein, so that wheresoever we shall be laid up, whether in the Bellies of *Fish*, the Entrails of *Beasts*, or by various Alterations become the *Food* of *Men*, yet the Great *Architect* of all Things knows where to find our scattered Remnants. But why should we engage Him in so infinite a Task, when the Work may as well be done a nearer way? And put him to the Expence of multiplying *Miracles*, when fewer will serve the Turn? When the Grand Alarm is given, He can soon fit our *Souls* with proper Matter for their future *Bodies*, out of the *Elements*, as well as out of their own *Antiquated Embers*. The *Jewish Rabbies* seem to deny the gathering together our dispersed *Ashes*, and assign the Trouble to a certain *small Bone* in every Man's Back, which they say, never suffers any *Putrefaction*, but remaining to the last Day in its Primitive Consistency, impassable and incorruptible, is then impregnated by a *Dew* from *Heaven*, which diffusing its *Virtue*, like a Ferment, not only animates and quickens this *Seminal Bone*, but also attracts all the *Atoms*, which formerly constituted the *Body*, though dispersed in the remotest *Corners*, and most hidden *Recesses* of the *Universe*, marshalling them in the same *Order* as they had before their *Dissolution*, and so in a Moment recovering the *Body* to its *Primitive State*. But these are gross Conceits for *Christians*, who believe, that our *Bodies* shall, in that great and *Final Change*, become *Spiritual* and *Immortal*, being for ever divested of all the *peculiar Circumstances* of *Flesh* and *Blood*.

Let the Manner be how it will please *God*, I am ravished to think what a bright and serene *Morning* the *Resurrection* will prove after the long *Night* of *Death*, and the languishing *Slumbers* of the *Grave*!

How



How vigorous and active we shall rise from our Beds of *Darkness*, how chearfull and blithe from the melancholy Regions of *Horror* and *Silence*! more sprightly than Youth; stronger than Lyons; swifter than Eagles! Full of Light, full of Joy, we shall soar aloft, and, like well-mounted Travellers, post it away through the *balmy Air*, and liquid *Skies*, till we arrive at the Place of admirable *Mansions*, and be welcomed to the *House of God*.

I dare not, with some of the *Jewish Rabbies*, say, that all shall not rise at the great *Day*; much less will I presume, with others, to particularize so far as to exclude all those who perished in *Noah's Flood*; or with a third Sort, to confine the *Resurrection* to the *Children of Israel*; as if we, that are of the *Gentiles*, were not capable of it as well as they. But above all, I reject the Censure of the *Talmudists*, who say, that neither *Bilha* the Concubine of *Jacob*, that lay with *Reuben*; nor *Doeg*, that caused *Saul* to kill *Abimelech* and the Priests; nor *Gebazzi*, the Servant of *Elijah* the Prophet; nor *Achitophel*, *David's* Prime Minister of State, shall rise from the Dead. These are the *Memoirs of Hebrew Superstition*; invidious Remarks, the peculiar *Heresy* of that over-weening *Nation*.

Yet I am more scandalized at some *Christians*, who will not allow *Salvation* to any Man that is not within the *visible Pale* of their *Church*, as if the *Eternal Sun* of Justice were eclipsed to all that are out of their narrow *Horizon*. Surely He enlightens every Man that comes into this *World*, and his *Rays* are not confined to *Countries* or *Parties*. He shines universally, and no Man can trace him in the *Zodiac* of his Mercy.

I dare not, it is true, with *Justin Martyr*, canonize the Philosophers, and place *Socrates* and *Heraclitus* in *Heaven*; neither am I sure, that *Aristotle*, by his learned Treatises of *Heaven*, has ob-

tained an Inheritance there himself. It is too officious a Regard, and too bold a Charity, thus happily to dispose of *particular Men*. On the other Side, I dread to pass the Sentence of *Damnation* on all the *antient Pagans*, and to aver, that none were saved that died before the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius*. Though the mere Light of *Natural Reason*, was not sufficient to conduct them, nor all their *Morality*, enough to entitle them to *Supreme Felicity*; yet I cannot be persuaded that Infinite *Goodness* would doom the virtuous *Gentiles* to the *Abyss* of *Misery*. Neither can any Man demonstrate, that *Christ* was not the Light of the *Gentiles* before his Incarnation, as well as after: And since *Abraham* saw his Day and was glad, how do we know, but that *Plato*, *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, *Pythagoras*, *Cyrus*, and other wise Lawgivers, Philosophers, and Kings, Men renowned for their *Prudence*, *Temperance*, *Fortitude*, *Chastity*, *Liberality*, and the like Virtues, might not also be favoured with a Glimpse of the *Messias*, the *Desire* of all Nations, before he appeared in the *Flesh*. Though we have no Records in *Scripture* of *Hermes Trismegistus*, *Zoroaster*, *Phocilides*, *Homer*, *Theognes*, *Epicetetus*, *Theseus* and *Hercules*; yet we cannot be assured, but that they had *Faith*, and expected the *Redeemer* to come, as well as *Job*, who was not of the *Holy Line*, but a *Branch* of the *Gentiles*.

When I consider what Pains some of the wiser *Heathens* have taken to find out the Truth; when I contemplate a *Pythagoras*, travelling through *Asia*, and particularly conversant in *Palestine*; an *Empedocles*, journeying into *Africk*, to learn the Wisdom of the *Ægyptians*; an *Alexander the Great*, falling at the Feet of the *Hebrew High-Priest*, I cannot think the *Heathen World* so ignorant of the true *Religion*, as is commonly imagined. They had a *Balaam* to instruct them, the *Sybils* to  
guide



guide them to the Knowledge of a future *Messias*, and for ought I know, some of them might have the *Scriptures* of the Old Testament too, or at least a good part of them, even before that celebrated Translation of the *Septuagint* was extant; since it was easy for those *Gentiles* who had Commerce with the *Jews*, to procure Copies of their *Law*, especially when they were made Captives in *Media*, *Assyria*, *Ægypt* and *Babylon*.

An *Esther* lying in the Bosom of *Abasuerus*, a *Daniel* sitting at the Right-hand of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belsazzar*, and *Darius*, had fair Opportunities of instructing those *Heathen Monarchs* in the *Mysteries* of the *Mosaic Law*, and surely Holy Persons would never neglect so noble a Work as proselyting the Kings and Princes of the *Gentiles* to God.

In the Days of *Solomon*, the Fame of the *Jewish Nation* had reached the utmost Parts of the *Earth*, *Kings* came from far, and *Queens* from the remotest Borders of the *Continent*, to be the *Disciples* of that Royal *Philosopher*, and Spectators of the *Hebrew Grandeur*. How could then the *Divine Oracles* be hid from the *Gentiles*, or the *Sacred Tradition* of *Shiloh* to come, not be delivered to the inquisitive *Nations* of the *Earth*! Without doubt, the *East* saw the dawning of the *Star of Jacob*, and the *South* could calculate his *Meridian*, even before he rose. Neither were the *North* and *West* without some Glimmerings of his Appearance.

The *Wise Men* that came to adore him at *Bethlehem*, performed but the Wishes of their *Fathers*, and the *Eunuch* of Queen *Candaces* made no Scruple to become a *Christian*, when *Philip* had convinced him that *He*, of whom the *Prophets* had so long foretold, was now come in the *Flesh*. Surely he was the desired of *Nations*, the Hope of the *Gentiles*, as well as the Glory of his People *Israel*. Therefore

I cannot number it among the Commendations of *Christianity*, that a great Part of those who profess that *Name*, are so presumptuously uncharitable, as to damn all that were not of the Seed of *Abraham* before *Christ* came in the *Flesh*, as if Salvation were entailed on one *Family*, and no Man could go to *Heaven* that was not circumcised.

Much rather had I believe, that in the very Instant of Death, *God* revealed the *Mystery* of *Redemption* to many innocent and virtuous Persons among the *Gentiles*, and infused a saving *Faith* in *Christ* into their Souls, at the very Moment that their Sences were forsaking their Bodies. Supplying their Want of *Scripture* or *Tradition*, with the Inspiration of his *Holy Spirit*, when they were taking the last gasp and breathing out their *own*.

Or if this be not thought sufficient, I will believe, That when *Christ* descended into *Hell*, he preached the *Gospel* to the *Spirits* which were there in Prison, not only those who were disobedient in the Days of *Noah*, but all such of the Race of *Noah*, as by compleating the Measure of their Sins, had sunk themselves into that fatal *Place* whether they were *Jews* or *Heathens*; and I cannot understand those *Texts* of *Scripture* which mention his spoiling of *Hell*, and leading *Captivity Captive*, if they may not be applied to his *Triumphant Deliverance* of some of those *Souls* which were shut up in the *Infernal Caverns*. Neither do I perceive any *Heresy* in believing, there might be some virtuous *Heathens* in the Retinue he carried with him from thence to *Heaven*, as well as some of the Sons of *Israel*. However, leaving the Manner of their Salvation to *God*, I will conclude, That it is unreasonable, uncharitable, and has too much of the *Jew* in it, to pass the Sentence of *Damnation* on all the *Gentiles*, since the *Holy Ghost* has assured us, That *God* is no Res-  
pecter



specter of Persons; but he that in every *Nation* fears and works Righteousness, is accepted of Him.

Besides, methinks, if Matters were brought to the severest Balance, it would not appear heterodox to say, that as all Men sinned in *Adam*, without their own Personal Knowledge or Consent, so some might be saved in *Christ*, even without a Particular and Personal Belief in Him, of whom perhaps they never so much as heard.

Some Grains of Allowance may be given to the involuntary *Frailties* of *Humane Nature*, some Indulgence granted to the invincible *Ignorance* of a great Part of *Adam's* Posterity, who, if they knew not the *High-way* to *Heaven*, which was revealed to their Brethren the *Jews* and *Christians*, might yet be conducted thither by some By-Path, since it is too narrow a Conceit of *God's* Mercy to think, that because he had chiefly manifested it in the Royal Road of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, therefore he could never go out of the beaten Track. This were to retrench the *Divine Prerogative*, and to tie him up to limited Conditions, whose Ways are in the great Deep, and whose Foot-steps no Created Being can trace.

The Satisfaction I have of the *Souls Immortality*, if it amounts not to a Demonstration, may yet be numbred among those *Proleptic Ideas* that need none, as being self-evident. It is a Parallel with first Principles, and has equal Force on my Understanding; for I am not more convinced, *That one and two make three*, than *that the Soul of Man is immortal*. So that I make it not so much an *Article* of my *Faith*, as a *Proposition* of my *Reason*, and a Conclusion of *Science*. Yet I do not always go so far round about, as by a long Train of Logical Deductions and Inferences, to dispute myself into the Remembrance of my *Immortality*. This indeed were necessary to persuade another; but I  
have

have a nearer Method to comfort myself with the Demonstration of this *Noble Truth*, while it becomes an Object of my very *Sense*, and I can feel that *Immortality* in myself, which my *Reason* tells me another is possessed of as well as I. This is easier to be experienced, than uttered in Words; it is an *Art* not to be acquired without assiduous *Reflection*, and strict *Animadversion* on our own Thoughts. But the *Fatigue* is more than recompenced with the ineffable *Pleasure* that attends it; for when by a long, and often repeated Practice, a Man has found the Way to keep close Pace with his own *Intellect* in all its *Flights*, and abstracted *Starts* from the *Body*, when he can stand on the Brink of the *Immaterial World*, and perceive what is before him, perceiving also that he perceives it, then it is he enjoys *Heaven* by Anticipation, and forestalls his *Future Beatitude*, by tasting *Immortality* at present. He is risen from the Dead, before he dies; and lives an *Eternity* of Ages in a *Moment*. Neither is this a sleeping *Chimera*, or a waking *Dream*, but a real Truth, a Truth easier to be practised than expressed.

It was but a drowsy Conceit in those Fathers, who fancied the *Soul* should sleep in the *Grave* till the *Resurrection* of the *Body*. Had they well traced the *Nature* of a *Spirit* from its first Principles, they would not have provided a *Dormitory* for that *Being* which would cease to *be*, should it cease to *act*, since its very *Essence* implies a Contradiction to *Rest*. I could as easily, and with equal Reason, believe it will be *annihilated* at its Separation from the *Body*, or at least, that it should be *metamorphosed* into something else; since, if it continue the same it was before the Dissolution of the *Body*, it must continue to think, it being indeed nothing else but a pure *Thought*; and how a *Thought* can take a Nap, is beyond the Verge of my *Philosophy* to apprehend;



prehend; neither do I know of any thing in *Divinity* that seems to countenance so dull a *Theorem*. As for those Texts of *Scripture*, which seem to adumbrate the supreme Felicity of the *Saints*, by the Notion of *Rest*, I do not think they mean a Cessation of the *Soul's natural Energy*; for how could it then be capable of that *Seraphick Love*, and *Joy* in the *Beatifick Vision*, which is the chief Entertainment of the Blessed in *Heaven*? It seems rather to intimate the *Soul's Escape* and *Deliverance* from the Troubles and Inquietudes of this *Mortal Life*, which may very well be called a *Rest*, and yet be consistent with an *Activity*, far surpassing that which it was endued with in the *Flesh*. The *Scripture* cloathes many abstruse *Mysteries* in familiar Dresses, the better to accommodate them to the Conceptions of vulgar and ignorant People, who make up far the greatest Part of *Mankind*, and we must not expect the rigid Definitions of *Aristotle* from the Sacred *Pen-Men*. But when we come scientifically, and according to the Method of the Schools, to treat of the *Natures* of Things, we ought to fit them with proper and intelligible Terms, and pursue their *Essences* by a continued Progress, not by wild Fits and Starts.

I have but small Acquaintance with the *future State*; but this I am sure of, there will be no Change, that will be so surprizing to me as that by *Death*. It is a Thing, of which I know but little, and none of the Millions of Souls that have past into the *invisible* World, have come again to tell me how it is.

## I.

*It must be done, (my Soul) but 'tis a strange,  
 A Dismal and Mysterious Change ;  
 When thou shalt leave this Tenement of Clay,  
 And to an unknown Somewhere wing away ;  
 When Time shall be Eternity, and thou (not how.  
 Shalt be thou know'st not what, and live thou know'st*

## II.

*Amazing State ! no Wonder that we dread  
 To think of Death, or view the Dead ;  
 Thou'rt all wrapt up in Clouds, as if to Thee  
 Our very Knowledge had Antipathy ;  
 Death could not a more sad Retinue find,  
 Sicknes and Pain before, and Darknes all behind.*

## III.

*Some courteous Ghost tell this great Secrecy,  
 What 'tis you are, and we must be.  
 You warn us of approaching Death, and why  
 May we not know from you what 'tis to Die ?  
 But you who've shot the Gulph, delight to see  
 Succeeding Souls plunge in with like Uncertainty.*

## IV.

*When Life's close Knot, by Writ from Destiny,  
 Disease shall cut, or Age unty ;  
 When after some Delays, some dying Strife,  
 The Soul stands shivering on the Ridge of Life ;  
 With what a dreadful Curiosity  
 Does she launch out into the Sea of vast Eternity.*

## V.



*So when the spacious Globe was delug'd o're,  
 And lower Holds could save no more,  
 On th' utmost Bough th' astonish'd Sinners stood,  
 And view'd th' Advances of th' encroaching Flood.  
 O're-topp'd at length by th' Elements encrease,  
 With Horror they resign'd to the untry'd Abyfs.*

*Norris.*

It is very desirable, to know in what Condition our Souls will be when they leave the Body, and what is the *Nature of that Abode* into which we must go, but which we never saw into; and through what Regions we must then take our Flight, and after what Manner this will be done. It is certain my Soul will then preserve the Faculties that are Natural to it, *viz. To understand, to will, to remember*, as it is represented to us, under the Parable of *Dives and Lazarus*: But alas! we little know how the People of the *disembodied Societies* act, and will, and understand, and communicate their Thoughts to one another, and therefore I long to know it. What Conception can I have of a separated Soul, (says a late Writer) but that *It is all Thought*?

I firmly think, when a Mans Body is taken from him by Death, he is turned into all *Thought* and *Spirit*. How great will be its Thought, when it is without any Hindrance from these material Organs, that now obstruct its Operations? In that *Eternity* (as one expresses it) the whole Power of the Soul runs together one and the same way. In *Eternity*, the Soul is united in its Motions; which way one Faculty goes, all go, and the Thoughts are all centred as in one *whole Thought* \* of Joy or Torment.

\* *Beverley's great Soul of Man. pag. 272.*

These Things have occasioned great *Variety of Thoughts* in me, and my Soul, when it looks towards the other World, and thinks itself near, it can no more cease to be inquisitive about it, than it can cease to be a Soul.

I am not at all edified in the *Notion* of the *Blessed Trinity*, by the Sight of a *Triangle*; neither can the whole *System* of the *Mathematicks* improve my Knowledge in this Point of *Divinity*. The *three* distinct *Faculties* of a *Humane Soul*, are far from illustrating to me the *Three Persons* in *One Essence*, since there is a *Subordination* in the Former, whereas there is an *Equality* in the Latter. Such Similitudes and Comparisons seem not to me a *Stenography*, or short Characters, but a false Spelling in *Divinity*. And though to *wiser Reasons*, and more *active Beliefs*, they may serve as *Luminaries* in the *Abyss* of Knowledge; yet my *Heavy Judgment* will never be able to mount on such weak and brittle *Scales* and *Roundels*, to the lofty *Pinacles* of true *Theology*. All the Force of *Rhetorical Wit*, has not Edge enough to dissect so tough a Subject, wherein the little obscure *Glimmerings* we gain of that *inaccessible Light*, come not to us in *direct Beams*, but by the faint *Reflections* of a *Negative Knowledge*. And we can better apprehend what *it is not*, than what *it is*. In the Disquisition of his Works, I own, that those highly magnify Him, whose *judicious Enquiry* into his *Acts*, and deliberate *Research* into his *Creatures*, return the Homage of a devout and learned *Paraphrase*. But in the Contemplation of that *Eternal Essence*, to which no created Thought can be adequate, I will humbly sit down, and silently admire that, which neither the Heart can conceive, nor the *Tongue* or *Pen* of *Men* or *Angels* can declare as they ought, and as it is.



I do not affect *Rhodomontadoes* in Religion, nor boasting of the *Strength* of my *Faith* : I do not covet Temptations, nor court Dangers : Yet I can exercise my *Belief* in the most difficult Point, when called to it ; and walk stedfast and upright in Faith, without the *Crutch* of a visible *Miracle*. I can firmly believe in *Christ*, without going in *Pilgrimage* to his *Sepulchre* ; neither need I the *Confirmation* that was vouchsafed to St. *Thomas*, that *Proverb* of *Unbelief*. However, I do not bless myself, nor esteem my *Faith* the better ; because I lived not in the *Days* of *Miracles*, nor ever saw *Christ*, or any of his *Disciples* : Or because I was not one of his *Patients*, on whom he wrought his *Wonders*. Both *their Faith* and *mine* were infused by the Ministration of the *Senses*. And as *they* believed, because they *saw* ; so *I* believe, because I *hear*, undeniable *Witnesses* give *Testimony*, of the same *Matter* of *Fact*. Nor do I esteem their *Faith* the more *Extraordinary*, who lived before his Coming ; since they raised not a *Belief* of the future *Messias*, but on clear *Prophecies*, and most significant *Types*, being assured by the constant Stream of *Tradition*, from Father to Son, that what *God* had predetermined, and foretold to *Adam* in Paradise, to *Abraham*, to *Jacob*, and the *Prophets*, should infallibly be accomplished in the Fullness of Time. And I cannot see wherein their *Faith* had the Advantage of ours, that it should deserve to be esteemed more bold and noble ; since they had an *Isaiab* to preach the *Gospel* to Them, who for the Eloquence of his Style, and his most accurate and particular Enarration of the *Birth* of *Christ*, has acquired the Title of the *fifth Evangelist*. It is certain, both their Faith and ours, rests on the *Divine Revelation*, whether it consist in *Prophecy* of Things to come, or *History* of Things past. The ultimate *Object* of our *Belief*, is one  
and

and the same, that is, the *Authority of God*. They had their *Sacraments* also to strengthen their Faith, as well as we. They were *baptized* in the *Cloud*, and in the *Sea*; they had *Manna* from *Heaven*, and *Water* out of a *Rock* in the *Earth*. They all eat the same Spiritual Meat, and drank the same Spiritual Drink as we; for they drank of the Spiritual *Rock of Ages*, that followed Them, and that *Rock* was *Christ*.

I do not conclude from hence, That there is no Difference between the *Sacraments* of the *Law*, and those of the *Gospel*. Doubtless, there is an Excellency in the latter, to which the former could not pretend. The *Elements* in Both are *Natural*, as *Water*, *Manna*, *Bread*, *Wine*, &c. so that in the Exterior, neither of them has the Advantage of the other. They were both also Conduits of the same inward *Grace* and *Spirit*. Only herein lies the Difference, that the *Jews* had it but by Measure; whereas the *Christians* receive it in Abundance. They touched but the Hem of *Christ's* Garment; but we feed on his *Body* and *Blood*. They did but wade in the low Ebb of *Grace*, whereas we swim in the High-Tide, and Overflowings of the *Holy Spirit*. Before the everlasting Sluices were drawn up; while the *Heavens* were kept shut, the *Waters* which are above the *Heavens* did but distil gently on Mankind; the Divine Influence came Drop by Drop, here a little, and there a little. But when *Christ* had once ascended up on High, and opened the *Eternal Gates* above, then he showered down his Gifts upon Men, and let loose the Flood of Light and Grace, that so it might water the whole Earth, and make glad the City of God, which is the Christian Church.

The *Sacraments of Christianity* are the principal Channels, through which Eternal Life is conveyed to our Souls. By *Baptism* we are transplanted from  
the



the Old Stock of the *First Adam*, and inoculated into Him who is the *True Vine*, in whom we grow up as Branches, receiving Nourishment, and Increase by the *Eucharist*, which conveys to us the vital Principles of *Immortality* and Salvation. I cannot speak of this tremendous Mystery, without a *Circumlocution*, nor think of it without a *Rapture*! It is such a *Complex of Riddles*, as it has posed the stoutest *Sampsons* of the Church to solve: He alone was able to think and speak aright of it in few Words, who, when he first instituted it, said, *This is my Body; This is my Blood*. That there is a real *Change* made in the outward Elements, after the Words of Consecration are pronounced, is an *Article* of my Faith; but the Manner how *this Change* is effected, is no Query of my *Philosophy*. I had rather humbly believe what I cannot comprehend, in this venerable *Sacrament*, than suffer any vain Disquisitions to stagger my Faith. I see *Bread and Wine*, both retaining the same Taste, Colour, and other natural Qualities of those Creatures. Therefore I conclude, there is no *Alteration* made, in that which is the Object of my *Senses*. The Change must be in the *Spiritual Part*, which only falls under the Intellect. And yet I believe this *Change to be Real*, though I cannot sensibly perceive wherein, or how, it is produced. Far be it from me to enter into the Secret of those, who make a mere *empty Figure* of the Blessed Sacrament; as if we were made Partakers only, of mere *Natural Bread and Wine*, in the Holy Communion. This is to follow the impious Steps of *Manicheus and Marcion*, who taught, that Our Saviour had only a Fantastick Figure of a Body, not a Real one; as if they thought the Blessed *Virgin Mary* brought forth nothing but a Shadow, because she was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. *This is to outstrip*  
 Judas,

Judas, and begin where his *Treason* left off: And as he sold his Master's Life; so we should rob the Church of his *Body and Blood*, which he bequeathed to her in his last Supper. Doubtless, his Body is in the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, but not *Bodily*, or after a corporeal Manner, not invested with all the gross Circumstances of *Flesh and Blood*, but after a Spiritual Manner, in a *Mystery* too profound for *Human Sense* or *Reason* to comprehend. I am extremely pleased with the Answer which Queen *Elizabeth* gave to the Bishop of *Winchester*, when he demanded her Opinion of the *Real Presence*, said she,

'Twas God the Word that spake it,  
He took the Bread and brake it;  
And what the Word did make it,  
That I believe and take it.

It was an ill-manner'd, as well as an envious Retort of him that stood by and said, Your Highness's Reply is like the *Delphic Oracle*, full of ambiguous Subtilty: He had discovered more Breeding and Charity, had he told her, that her Answer favoured of his Wisdom, who, when tempted by the *Pharisees* with a Question concerning the Lawfulness of paying *Tribute to Cæsar*, took a Piece of Money and asked whose Image the *Superscription* was that was stamped on it; they said, *Cæsar's*. He replied, *Give therefore to Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's, and to God the Things that are God's*. It is certainly a necessary Piece of Prudence sometimes to obviate the *Trains* of an Enemy, with a witty Evasion; which may be done without denying the Truth, or violating one's Conscience. Those who would *trapan a Man with Queries*, and make him a Transgressor for a Word, deserve to be paid in the same Coin,



Coin, and by an *ingenious* adapting of Words, and placing of Periods, be baffled in their Design, and sent away like Fools as they came, without any better Satisfaction than they can reap from a *Riddle*. In my Opinion, it is but a pious *Scepticism* to suspend our Thoughts from determining the particular Mode of Christ's being *present* in the Sacrament ; since it is impossible ever to demonstrate so recondite a Secret, into which even the Angels themselves, those *perfect* *Intelligences* perhaps look with Admiration, without improving their Knowledge. It is sufficient to my *humble Faith*, that my Redeemer is there, and that when I worthily receive the blessed Sacrament, I shall receive the Author of it into my Tabernacle, and be united to the heavenly Spouse. This is the true *hidden Manna*, which nourishes both Angels and Men ; this is the *Bread of Life*, which strengthens Man's Heart ; this is the Wine, which rejoices God and Man. This is that *heavenly Morsel*, which God has given us as an Antidote against the Dregs of that Venom we all derive from *Adam's* eating the forbidden Fruit.

And he is a *kind Physician*, who, when nothing else in the divine *Pharmacopæa* could be found available for so great a Cure, *applies his own Body*, to heal the Distempers of our Souls, and his Blood to restore the *Spoils of Human Nature*. None, but the Favourites of the King of Heaven, are admitted to this *immortal Banquet*. None, but such as have the Wedding Garment on, can have Access to this Table of Delicacies, this Repast of *Royal Dainties*. Many, indeed, and too many, it is to be feared, are licensed to come into the *King's Anti-chambers*, and to sit down in the Church and taste the *outward Elements* ; but it is the Privilege of his Saints only to enter his Cabinet, and be *regaled* with the costly

Entertainment of his secret Table, and to partake of the New Wine of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Sacrament of the *Lord's-Supper* is the nearest and most *visible* Communion that can be had with God and Christ upon Earth. Here are the greatest reviving, and the sweetest Refreshings that a pious Soul is capable of on this Side Heaven itself. Other Duties seem to be our Work ; this our *Meat and Wages* ; other Duties are but preparative to this ; *Baptism, Praying, Preaching, Hearing, Meditating, Conferring*, are all ordained, but to fit us for this high and mysterious Ordinance. Here is the *whole Contrivance of Salvation represented in a little Bread and Wine*, whereby God invisibly seals up an Assurance of his everlasting Love upon our Hearts.

It is grown even to a Proverb, saith *Acosta*, among the poor *Indians*, that have entertained the Faith, that *Qui Eucharistiam semel suscepit, &c. He must never more be unholy that hath once received the holy Communion.*

As to the *Posture of Receiving*, I am not scrupulous, being willing to conform to the Custom of those with whom I *communicate* : I can receive on my *Knees*, without Danger of Idolatry ; or *Sitting*, without the Guilt of Contempt. This latter I esteem of greater Antiquity ; it being the Posture wherein *Christ communicated to his Disciples* at the last Supper, unless it be said they *lay along* according to the Mode of the Eastern People in those Days. However, I do not think the *Position* of the Body, but the Preparation of the Soul, is required to render one a *Worthy Communicant* in these holy Mysteries.



I censure not the Primitive Christians, nor those more *Modern* ones, who communicate frequently ; yet I should be timorous to approach these *holy Mysteries* too often, lest I should incur the Judgment which *St. Paul* has pronounced on those who *eat and drink unworthily*. I have Charity for others, who celebrate this Sacrament monthly, weekly, or daily ; but I should have little for myself, should I receive this tremendous Mystery of Life, with less Preparation than were *requisite to fit me for Death*. It being in the Number of those Medicines, which either *kill or cure*, according to the Constitution to which they are applied.

If we examine the Books of Physicians, those *Registers of Human Frailty* and Mortality, we shall find no less than *Six thousand Diseases* on the Score, to which Man's *Body* is liable. And it is to be feared, the *Distempers of the Soul* come not short of the Account. What is Pride but a *Timpany* ? Lust but a *Feaver* ? Drunkenness but a *Dropsy* ? Envy and Malice but the *Consumption* of the Soul ? To obviate these, and innumerable more spiritual Maladies, God has, as a Token of his infinite Bounty, given his Ministers Commission to dispense to the Sons of Men the *Sacrament of the Body and Blood*, as a divine Catholicon, or Cure, for all the Diseases which are incident to our Souls ; but with this Condition, that he who partakes of these *holy Mysteries* unworthily, instead of being healed, does but increase his Malady, work it up to a dangerous *Crisis*, if not to a desperate *Paroxysm*, which affords no Hopes, but a fearful Expectation of *Judgment to come*. *Cyprian* tells us two remarkable Stories, that one coming to the Sacrament, after the Minister had given him the *Bread*, and he going to eat it, it stuck in his Throat *Gladium sibi sumens non cibum*, saith he, he received his Bane instead of Bread ; the other came, and took the Bread into his Hand, and

when he went to eat it, there was nothing but *Ashes in his Hand*. This Apprehension, I ingenuously declare, has had such *Influence* on me, as to restrain me long from the *holy Table*. I tremble at the Thought of *eating and drinking my own Damnation*, and of trampling under-foot the Blood of the *Eternal Testament*.

I love not to humour my *Spleen*, or gratify my *Hypocondria*, by inveighing against the Luxury of the *present Age*, as if it were worse than those of old, and that our *Fore-fathers* did not eat and drink to Excess as well as we : The present Intemperance of Mankind is but the *Transmigration of the former* : And our Posterity shall but act over the Patterns we set them. *Drunkenness is as old as Noah's Flood, and Epicurism began with Adam*. The one had no sooner escaped the universal Inundation of *Water*, but he had like to have been drown'd in a *Deluge of Wine* ; and the other, not content with the large Indulgence and Commission God had given him to eat of the *Fruit of Paradise*, must needs *leap the Fence* which guarded the *Forbidden Tree* ; and when he might have banquetted, without Satiety or End, on the *Varieties* which would have given him *Life and Immortality*, he plays the Glutton, and surfeits himself with the Plant of Death and Damnation. His *Children* soon learned to tread in their Father's Steps, and *Gluttony was equally propagated with Mankind*. And tho' that *Repairer* of Adam's almost ship-wrecked Progeny could be abstemious, when he might have furnished his Table with all the *Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air at one Meal* ; yet he could not refrain from the tempting *Fruit of the Vine*. His Ebriety was also catching, and the Incestuous Offspring of *Lot* owed their Original to the *Blood of the Grape*. Before the Flood, Men were busied in Banqueting and Riot ; so they have been ever since,



since, and so they will be to the End of the World. Men are great Followers of Antiquity in the Practice of these Vices.

For my Part, I envy not the *Board of Vitellius*, that at one Meal was covered with *One Thousand Fish*, and double that Number of *Fowl*. Neither do I covet the more expensive Feasts of *Heliogabulus*. The refin'd Luxury of *Cleopatra* seems to me less fordid, tho' more prodigal, who at one Draught swallowed down a *King's Ransom*. It was not her Palate she gratified in that rich Portion, but she humoured the Gust of her Ambition; which is a *sublimier sort of Vice*, and may not unfitly be called the *Gluttony of the Soul*, while it revels on the Breath of Fame, and Epicurizes with a *Chamelion-like Appetite* on the Air of Honour.

Intemperance is the *Blind Side of Mortals*; it is our soft Place, where we suffer ourselves to be stroaked and tickled to Death by the *flattering Serpent*. This made *Isaac* misplace his Blessing for a *Piece of Venison*, and his Son to sell his Birth-right for a *Mess of Pottage*. The *Italian Proverb* hits the Glutton home when it says, He digs his Grave with his Teeth, and cuts his Throat with the Knife that carves his Meat.

Rioting and Drunkenness were formerly esteemed the national Sin of *Germany* only, but I believe other Nations may put in for a Share in the Charter: *It is the Epidemic Vice of the whole World*: Men fall passionately in Love with it, as if they were of *Mucæus* the Poet's Opinion, who held, That *perpetual Darknes* was the only Reward of Merit and Virtue. The very *Mahometans* themselves, who are expressly forbidden by their Law to taste of Wine, being told by *Mahomet*, that there is lodged a *Devil in every Grape*, are sworn Votaries to *Bacchus*, and the greatest Drunkards on Earth.

For my own Part, I could be content with the Diet of *Johannes de Temporibus*, who when he had lived Three Hundred Years, being asked by the King of *France*, *What Method* he took to preserve his Life to so great an Age; replied, *Intus Melle, extra Oleo*: I say, I could be content with his Diet, not so much for the Sake of *spinning out my Life* to Centuries of Years, which yet I believe were not altogether impracticable in one of my Constitution, as that by a constant and habitual Disuse of *merely Animal* Enjoyments, I might the more closely and vigorously attend the Operation of my Soul, and be always *awake to the superior Faculties of my Mind* and Intellect, *Anima Sicca est Anima Sapiens*, was a true Maxim of the Philosopher; and the Sons of *Minerva* experience it.

I abhor the superstitious Cant, and discriminating *Shibboleth* of *Enthusiasts*, who must needs take upon them to alter the Form of sound Words; as if the Dialect of the Primitive Church were grown obsolete, or that the Apostles understood not the *Orthography of Christian Faith*. I like not those spiritual *Boutefeus*, who take a great deal of Pains to breed 'a Quarrel between *Religion and Nature*, and set those two Twins together by the Ears; as if we could not be good Christians, unless we deny our *Sense and Reason*. Certainly it is not the Business of Religion to supplant and extirpate Nature, but to prune and rectify it. *Religion* is that which polishes and smooths the Roughness of lapsed Humanity, pares away the vicious Knobs which grow up with us from our *tainted Embryo*, and, by various Instruments of Grace, forms and squares us into fit Materials for God's holy Temple. *The Work of Regeneration seems, in some Manner, to copy that of Creation*. The Holy Ghost, at his first Visit, finds us, in our corrupt State, but a mere *Chaos*, a



confused *Heap of Passions* and sensual Appetites ; our Reason, that *Light of our Souls*, lies dormant, smother'd, as it were, by our Animal Faculties ; Darkness covers the Face of this *Microcosm*, till he gives the Word, *Fiat Lux* ; and, by a forcible Energy, strikes some divine Sparks out of our *flinty* Hearts. Thus separating the *celestial* Parts from the *terrestrial*, and sublimating us into the Similitude of his own glorious Essence ; enduing us with *Faith*, without destroying our *Reason*, and inspiring us with Charity, without exterminating our Passions. Thus I can believe the most transcendent *Mysteries* of our Religion, and yet not be guilty of Credulity and blind Devotion : And I can practise *Christian Moderation*, tho' I could never learn the Stoical Apathy.

I highly value the sacred Scriptures, as the *Oracles of Divinity, and Rules of Faith* ; yet I esteem them not a System of Philosophy, or a Pandect of *natural Science*. They are able to make us wise unto Salvation, and perfect in the Knowledge of God, through Faith in Christ Jesus ; but they instruct us not in *Mundane Curiosities*, nor acquaint us with the Theory of all his Works. That frightful Caution of the Apostle, *beware of vain Philosophy*, is no Bug-bear to my Studies, nor can it startle my harmless Enquiries into the *Secrets* of the Elements. I will not be afraid of prying into the Circumstances of the *Earth*, since *Job* has told us, it is *hanged upon Nothing* : Nor of casting my Eyes up to the Heavens, and examining the Motions, Influences, and Operations of the *Sun, Moon, and Stars*, since the same holy Patriarch was posed with this Astrological Question by God himself : Canst thou *restrain the sweet Influence of the Pleiades, or loose the Bands of Orion* ? There are many natural Observations in the *Bible*, which may serve as Hints or Spurs to more  
accurate

*accurate Disquisitions* : But in no Place that I know of does it set a *Non ultra* to those sober Enquirers, who by making a modest and judicious Search into the *Works of the Creation*, are capable of returning a more exact and consummate Praise to the Eternal *Architect*. Indeed, most, if not all, the *manual Trades* in the World, are but the several *Species* of Practical Philosophy : While the Mechanick puts in Execution the *Theory* of the Student, and what the one dictates from the *School of Nature*, the other experiments in the *Shop of Art*. Neither would Men know how to keep themselves in Action, or maintain Commerce, were it not for the Sake of *Philosophy*. To this are owing all the Advances and *Progressions* that ingenious Men have made in their Callings and Occupations, and every *Smith, Carpenter, Mason, &c.* that makes an Improvement in his Craft or Mystery, deserves the Title of a *Virtuoso*, and to be numbered among the Philosophers.

Among all the Sciences, there is none to which had I Leisure I could be more devoted than to *Astronomy*, and for this Reason I could raise a Pyramid to the Inventors of the *Telescope*, That Happy Midwife to new Discoveries in the Heavens ; and think myself no less obliged to Him that first found out the *Motion of the Earth*. Both have Enfranchised me from the Slavery of Prepossession, and taught me to *unthink* the Sentiments of my green-er Years. Methinks I owe no Allegiance to *Pto- lomy*, and am perfectly weened from the Magisterial Dictates of the *Stagyrite*. I cannot so readily believe that the *Sun* moves above two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Miles every Minute of Time, as that the earth moves Eighteen Miles in that Space. And that the *Planet Saturn* moves ten, and the *fixed Stars* a Hundred Times faster and farther than the *Sun* in the same Space, which must be the  
Con-



Consequence of the *Earth's standing still*, and the Sun's Motion. It seems no good Divinity to me, to expect that from Gods Infinite Power, which is repugnant to his equal Wisdom, and the *Laws of Motion* which he has established in the Universe. This were to make one of his Attributes *clash* with another, and to calumniate his Holiness, which consists in the *Harmony* of them all. I adore his Omnipotence, and tremble at the Thought of calling in Question the Power that made *all Things of Nothing*. Yet I think it my Duty to be wise as well as devout, and to speak *rightly* as well as *reverently* of his Divine Perfections. As his Word is the *Rule of my Faith*, so his Providence is the *Pole Star* of my Reason. And in the Scrutiny of his Works I do not so much enquire what he is able to do, as what he uses to do; being assured, that as nothing is to him impossible, so he has stated the Being, Actions, Passions, Qualities and Circumstances of all Things, ordering them in exact Number, Weight and Measure. So that, *à posse Dei ad esse Rei non valet Consequentia*. He has fixed the Laws of *Loco-motion* in Corporeal Substances, and tied up the *Primum Mobile* it self to a certain Proportion of Time and Distance, which it can no more exceed, than the smallest *Wheel* of a Watch.

Such prodigious *Whirligigs*, as the Heavenly Bodies must needs be, in the *Ptolomaick Hypothesis*, makes me giddy to think on it, and I believe they were troubled with a Vertigo, that first *reeled* upon the Notion: Or they laboured under the Deception of those at *Sea*, who sailing within Sight of the Shore, not being able to perceive the Motion of the Vessel that carries them, are apt to fancy the Neighbouring *Cliffs*, *Towns* and *Trees* were under Sail, and steering a contrary Course, since they so appear to do. For not less silently do I believe the *Earth moves constantly round on her Axis*, thus ma-

king the natural Day and Night, without putting the whole Frame of the Universe into an unconceivable Hurry.

The *Planet Jupiter* is discovered by the Telescope to make the same Circulation in 10 Hours, *Mars* in 23, and the *Sun* himself in 28 Days. These are no Chimæras or Dreams of Poets, no Metaphysical Speculations of *Nut-shell* Brains, but real Truths, demonstrable by Art and ocular Experience. And methinks it is a more *Uniform Idea*, if we suppose the *Earth to be a Planet* like the rest, and to take its Turn in the *Dance* round the *Sun*, who is placed in the Centre of this Vortex, and is the *true Apollo*, to whose Music the whole *Planetary System* keeps Time. I fear not the Lash of *Maurolycus*, nor the Scourge of his bigotted Brethren. If *Copernicus* was by them thought *Scuticâ & Flagello dignus*, for innovating on the Doctrines of *Ptolomy*; what was *Ptolomy* himself worthy of, who entrenched on a greater Antiquity, and undermined the Philosophy of *Aristarchus Samius*, who taught the *Motion of the Earth* above four hundred Years before *Ptolomy* was an Infant? For my Part, I think it no *Treason* against the Common-wealth of Learning, to say, I prefer *Galileo's Tube* to *Ptolomy's Spectacles*, and the Discoveries of our English *Royal Society*, to the blind Conjectures of the *Peripateticks*, and the wild Speculations of *Athens*.

When I was first informed that there were discovered *four new Stars moving about Jupiter*, and *three about Saturn*, I was as well pleased as they who received the earliest News of *Columbus's landing in America*. I am so far from being of *Alexander's* Humour, that instead of weeping, I should heartily rejoice, could I be credibly satisfied, That there are *ten Thousand more Worlds* than are already discovered.

I am naturally melancholy, and the Weight of this *leaden* Complection does so depress my Spirits,  
that



that all the Race of Mankind on Earth seems too small to afford *Variety* enough for a Relief. This makes me the more willing to believe, what my Reason suggests to be true, that the *Planets are Inhabited*. It is a lively, as well as a rational Notion ; and since they are dark, opaque Bodies, like the Earth we tread on, having no other Light but what they borrow from the *Sun*, and seem in all other Circumstances to be *adapted for Habitations*, I see no Solæcism in Philosophy, nor Heresy against the *Faith*, to believe they are *really inhabited*, as is this Globe. That they have *Succession* of Day and Night, and their *Satellites*, or Moons to give them Light by Night, even as we, is demonstrable to the Eye, by the Help of the *Telescope*. But there would, in my Opinion, be little Need of all this, were there no *rational Inhabitants in those Cælestial Globes*. It is a fastidious Pride in Man, to fancy all this *glittering Furniture* above, was only made for Ornament, or for *Shepherds* to gaze on in the Night, or for some other inferior Uses of the Sons of *Adam*. And it is a narrow Conceit to imagine, that though this Globe be plentifully inhabited by all Sorts of Animals, *not a Turf of Land, nor a Puddle of Water, being without its Tenants*, yet all those ample and glorious Bodies above should lie empty and vacant, though some of them be far bigger than our Earth, and for ought we know, may be ten Times *more commodious* for Habitation. Those Passages in *St. Paul's Epistles* to the *Philippians* ii. 11. *Ephes.* i. 9, 10. *Colos.* i. 16. seem to be calculated for the *Inhabitants of those Heavenly Bodies*. And his emphatical Words in *Ephes.* iii. 9. seem to be but a Transcript of the Revelations he received, and of the Things he saw, when he was *wrapped into the Third Heaven*, viz. That there are some in those Heavenly Places, even Principalities and Powers, to whom the mani-

fold Wisdom of God in Christ, was made known, and that they were not only created by Him, but for Him, and that they and we are *all of one Family or Descent*. These may be some of the ἀρρήτα ῥήματα which that Holy Apostle speaks of in 2 Cor. xii. 4. *Words and Mysteries which could not be uttered*. And for what I know, those Beings which he call *Principalities, Powers, Might, Thrones and Dominions*, may be no other than the several *glorious Colonies* of the Cœlestial Family, dwelling in the Stars, who all believe in the same Eternal Jesus, even as we do, and through his Meditation, make their Approaches to God the Father. This may be *the farther Fellowship of the Mystery of God, hid from the Beginning*. This the untraceable Riches of Christ, which put St. Paul to an ὡ βάθος! ὡ ὑπερέαλλον μέγεθος τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ O the Depth of his Wisdom! O the superlative Greatness of his Power! But whether *the Planets be inhabited* or no, this I am assured of, and can produce an Hundred authentick Witnesses, that they are *dark Bodies*, like the Earth we tread on, and that they have no Light, but what they receive from the Sun; which also they do but partially enjoy like us, by *successive Hemispheres*, having their Day and Night measured out to them, proportionate to the Time they take up in moving round their Centres.

When I have tired myself with following these *visible Motions of Nature*, I retire Home again, thinking to take Sanctuary in myself, and find a Rest in the contemplation of my own Soul: But there I do but commence a new Fatigue, and am hurried about in a *perpetual Circle*, by an invisible Energy within me. I think, speak, and act with *infinite Variety*, yet know not how I perform these different Operations. I know myself to be an *Imcorporeal Substance*, and can easily feel out my own

Inde-



Independency on the Body. I look on this *House of Clay* I carry about with me, to be only my Prison. But how I am confined to this Prison, I, that am but a poor Scintillation, or Spark of the Eternal Sun, is a *Riddle* which I cannot solve. I can better imagine, how a Beam of our visible Sun may be united to a Marble Statue, than that a *pure Thought* should be fastned to a Clod of Earth, from which it cannot free itself but by Death, though it can pervade all the *Universe* beside. What Cement is it, that thus closely ties together two such incompatible Essences as *Heaven and Earth*, Light and Darknes, Spirit and Body? This is a Knot must be left for *Elias* to untie, and is indeed one chief Argument of the *Shipwreck* of Human Reason, since not only all other Things are obscure to us, but we are so to ourselves; the nearest Objects, even our own *Domestick* Operations, are as incomprehensible to us, as those that are farthest off. The Things that touch us, nay, the very Faculties by which we *touch, see, understand, &c.* are as distant from us as the *ninth* Sphere, and we are as much Strangers to ourselves, as to the Inhabitants of *Terra Incognita*. There would be nothing more welcome to me, than a *History of my Original*, for I do not compute my Age or Family by the short Chronology of the *Parish Register*; nor do I think myself much the older by my Mother's additional Record of *nine Months* I lived in her Womb. I esteem her Reckoning from my *Conception* but the tragick Memoirs of my Death, and those which by most are accounted the *Chambers of Life*, and Shops of Generation, are no better in my Judgment, than the Receptacles of the Dead, Seminaries of Corruption, the Graves of Souls, *defunct to the higher World*. For I believe I was then born, when the Morning Stars *sang together*, and when all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.

Joy. I time my *Infancy* with that of the Universe, and esteem no Man older or younger than myself, no, not the *Angels* themselves, believing that all *Spiritual* Substances were created together, in the Beginning. I will not, with some, accuse *Moses* of scantiness in his *History of the Creation*, because according to the Letter he seems to take but little Notice of *Immaterial* Beings. The Hebrew *Cabbala*, with the Commentaries of their learned Rabbins, and some of the *Primitive* Fathers of the Christian Church, do sufficiently evince, that there are greater Mysteries contained in the three first Chapters of *Genesis*, than the bare Letter, or vulgar Translations seem to exhibit. There is a *Sacrament* in that Holy Language, which whosoever partakes of, can be no Stranger to the Natural and Divine Truths couched under it. To such a one, the History of the *Terrestrial Adam's* happy State in Paradise, and his Banishment from thence, will be an Hieroglyphick of the original Beatitude of the immaterial World, and the Degeneracy of human Souls, their Descent from the *Ætherial* Mansions, and *Confinement to Houses of Clay*, as well as of the Fall of Angels. I seem to myself, not without Reason, to embrace the Doctrine of the *Præ-existence of Souls*, since it was among the *Credenda* of many antient Sages, a peculiar Tradition of the Jews, and the general Opinion of all the East. That Question which was put to Our Saviour, concerning the *Man that was born Blind*, whether it was for his own Sins, or those of his Parents, seems clearly to imply, That he was in a Condition or Capacity of *sinning before his Birth*; which how it could be, without supposing the *Præ-existence* of his Soul, is past my Divinity or Philosophy to unriddle. The various Conjectures also which the Jews made of Christ, according to the Report of his Disciples, when some *said he was Elias*, others  
that



that he was one of the Prophets, a third Sort, that he was John the Baptist risen from the Dead, are evident Arguments, That the Doctrine of Præ-existence, and a *Metempsychosis* was established, as Part of the Creed of that Nation. Of which also, that Passage in the Wisdom of Solomon is no obscure Hint, where the Author says, *Or rather being a good Spirit, I came into a Body pure and undefiled.* Neither am I startled because I find not Christ, or any of his Apostles asserting, or so much as mentioning any such Doctrine. St. John's Hyperbole, in the last Verse of his Gospel, satisfies me, that I must not expect to find all that our Saviour did and said, registered by the Evangelists: And St. Paul's frequent Exhortation to hold fast the Traditions that he had imparted to them, whether by *Word* or *Epistle*, convince me, That it is not unreasonable to conclude, that he delivered many Doctrines in his Sermons, which he had no Occasion to mention in his *Letters to the Churches*: Among which, this might be one. However, it is a sufficient Warrant to my Belief, That I no where in all the Scriptures can find this Doctrine reprehended; which, had it been an Error, could not have escaped the Censure of Christ and his Apostles, it being the universal Tenet, of all Sorts of Jews, except the Sadduces. When I consider also, that Origen and Ammonius taught it in the Schools of Alexandria, Plotinus himself learned it from the latter; and that all the Primitive Fathers who were Platonists, asserted it, not only as a Philosophical, but also as a Divine Truth; I look upon it as an Effect of Gothick Barbarity and Ignorance, which afterwards overspread all Christendom, that neither this, nor hardly any other Point of Platonism, was countenanced in the Christian Schools, but only the Dictates of Aristotle and his Ghost Averroes. In fine, that elegant Flourish of St. Austin, *Infundendo creatur,*

*creatur, creando infunditur*, is no Rule of my Faith in this Point, since it fastens so many irreverend Consequences on God Almighty; neither can I believe the Soul to be *ex Traduce*, because it carries in its *Front*, so many *Inconsistencies* in Philosophy, besides the Indignity that is done to the Soul thereby, which amounts to a true *Scandalum Magnatum*, since it is levelled at the whole Order of *immaterial Beings*. I must therefore believe, that I had a Being *long* before I came into this Body, and yet not resolve the Manner of my Existence, into a mere *Potentiality*, or an unactive Slumber in the *Bosom* of my Causes, as if I were then but a *Seminal Idea* in the Blood of my Fathers, or a *Metaphysical Dream* of my present self. I believe I was in a State of greater Activity before I was *conceived* by my Mother, than since she bore me; and for what I know, have *ranged all the boundless Tracts of the Universe*, been *Naturalized in the several Regions of the Sky and Air*, till being tired with so vast a *Ramble*, and willing to try all the States of Life, I was, by the Force of a strong Inclination, and the irresistible Charm of rightly adapted Matter, *allured* into this terrestrial Body, here to do *Penance* for the Faults of my Superior Life, and in this Horizon between the upper and the lower World to make my Choice of Good or Evil, Light or Darkness, Life or Death. This unlocks all the *Ænigma's of Providence*; and reconciles the harsher Difficulties with which the immediate Creation or Translation of Souls is involved. It is the noblest Instrument of Virtue, the sharpest *Spur* to a divine Life, whilst it doubles the Hopes we have of being immortal *à Parte post*, by assuring us we were so *à Parte ante*. And that it is not from any arbitrary Decree of God, inconsistent with the rest of his divine Perfections, that we shall live for ever; but



but from our own Nature and Essence, being created to subsist an *interminable* Duration of Ages.

I believe those Books of the holy *Scripture* which are lost, could they possibly be recovered again, would serve as a Lamp to enlighten us in many *Obscurities* of Religion, History, and Nature : And if the Writings of *Jasher*, *Iddo* the Prophet, &c. could inform us nothing of the *Pre-existence* of Souls, it is very probable the more early Oracles of *Enoch* would, since he was but the *seventh Soul* that was drenched in a *terrestrial Matter*, and led so pure and incorrupt a Life, as would tempt one to believe, that he was *awakened* to the Memory of his former State, which, for aught we know, might have no small Influence on his succeeding Change.

I have often wondered where St. *Jude* had so particular an Account of St. *Michael* the Arch-Angel's Dispute with the *Devil* about the *Body* of *Moses*, that he was able to relate the very Words that passed between them. Surely the *Jews* had some Books, or at least Traditions, which were believed to be orthodox, though they were not so much as mentioned in the sacred Canon ; for we cannot, without great Impiety, imagine that the *holy Saint* would impose upon our Belief any Thing that was foreign or apocryphal. I am apt to conclude from hence, that there were many *traditional Doctrines* entertained among the *Hebrews*, which are by us esteemed no better than Fables.

However, though I am thus convinced of the Truth of our *Pre-existence*, and that this present Life is but a *Shadow* or *Dream*, in Comparison of what we enjoyed before our Immersion in the *Flesh*, yet I would not have this Dream interrupted by any untimely or harsher Stroke of Destiny. I should think it no Inconvenience to live long, but rather a Blessing, that so a Multitude of Years might scum

off the Froth and Sullage of our Appetites and Passions, that so being *gradually* weaned from those low Affections which brought us down to the Earth, we may, without any Disquiet or Turbulency, remount to our *æthereal Homes*; for I am apt to think that those Souls who go out of their Bodies with any *remaining Relish* upon them of the Body, like Fruit that is either plucked off, or shaken down by violent Winds, still retain in their Separation a raw and eager Smack of the Flesh, with a languishing Bias towards it; whereas he that has tarried his full Period in the Body, parts from it with Ease and Willingness, as *ripe Fruit* drops from the Tree. And therefore I do not wonder that the most general Scene of *Apparitions, Ghosts, &c.* is the Church-yard, or at least that Place where the Body of the *Spectrum* was buried. And the removed Earth, which covered the *Cobler of Silesia's Body*, is a shrewd Intimation, that there are some *departed Souls*, which, if they seek not a Re-union with their Bodies, yet endeavour to hold a *Kind of Correspondence* with them even in the Grave; and though the Impossibility of being married again to these their dear *Consorts*, after that final Divorce, were enough, one would think, to cure their impotent Desires, yet they burn with a new Lust, and commit a *spiritual Adultery* in the unlawful Bed of the Grave. These I look on as the Effects of a *too early* and violent Separation, and therefore esteem *Methuselah*, and the rest of the Fathers before the Flood, happy, who prolonged their Years to the *utmost* Standard of human Life, and seemed not so much to die, for that imports Violence, as voluntarily to forsake their *old rotten Habitations*, shake Hands with their Bodies, and so return to the *æthereal Palaces*, from whence they had so long *straggled*.

Yet, notwithstanding the great Esteem I have of *long Life*, as a Means rather to improve than impair



pair us, I cannot promise myself to outlive a *Jubilee*, though I have already seen one Revolution of *Saturn*. Neither do I affect to make *Popes*, *Emperors*, *Kings*, and *Grand Seigniors*, the Land-Marks in the Chronology of myself; that were to insult over the *royal* Ashes of Princes, besides the Ambition in *ranking* myself in their Number. Methinks I grow old even at those Years when the World counts me young, and possess the Heritage of *David's* last *ten Years* of Fourscore, in the *Prime* of my Age.

Indeed the whole Earth, and all this *planetary World*, seems to droop and decay; every *Species* of Being grow weak and languid, and seem to draw near their Dissolution; yet it is needless to engage God in the Act, since, though *Creation* was above the Force of Nature, yet *Mutation* is not, and no *Annihilation* can proceed from that paternal Effence of Essences. It seems easy to me to believe, that the World will perish upon the *Ruins of its own Principles*; and though the precise Period of its Destruction be not known to the Angels themselves, yet there are not wanting some *philosophical Rules*, whereby one might venture to calculate its Duration, and by observing the various Attempts, Eruptions, and Devastations, made by *Fire* already, one may conjecture about what Time that most *active* Element shall be let loose, to destroy this Face of the World, and transform this *superannuated* Heaven and Earth into *new ones*, as the holy Prophet has foretold; for as to Annihilation, I look on it as a Chimera, or Non-entity, which cannot be said to flow from him who is *All-being*, and the Fountain of Existence. It were easier to conceive that Cold should be the immediate Effect of Fire, and Darkness the natural Result of the actual Presence of Light, than to think that *Annihilation*, or *not Being*, can proceed from him who is the original Source of Being, from whose divine Power, Wisdom, and

Goodness, all Things flow by a *necessary Emanation*, and continue in their several Perfections by as unalterable a Law as that which gave them ; so that there can be no Vacuity supposed in their eternal Subsistence, no Leaps or Starts from something to nothing. It is far more agreeable to the Principles of Philosophy to conceive, that only the gross and corruptible Part of the Universe shall be subject to the *Action of Fire*, such as the Earth we tread on, with the other Planetary Bodies ; but that the *purest Æther* shall remain for ever untouched, unchanged, the Sanctuary of the Blessed, the Habitation of the Spirits of *just Men made perfect*. I am also confirmed in this Belief by something more sacred and authentic than Natural Philosophy ; for when the Royal Psalmist, in that divine Rhapsody, calls upon the *Heavens of Heavens, and the Waters which are above the Heavens*, to praise God, he gives this for a Reason, *viz.* Because he spake, and they were made, he commanded, and they were created. He established them to Eternity, and *for everlasting Ages* : He fixed a Decree, which he will not disannul. Then he calls upon the Earth and all Creatures therein, to join in the same *Act of Praise*, but not for the same Reason ; not because the *Earth shall endure for ever*, but because the Name of God alone is exalted, and his Honour above Heaven and Earth. Which Distinction seems to me an evident Argument, of the *unalterable Stability of the celestial and æthereal World*, whatsoever Mutations and Changes the terrestrial may be subject to.

That those immense Tracts of quiet and impassable *Æther* shall be the *Seat of the Blessed*, is very consistent with Philosophy, and no ways repugnant to Divinity. However, let the Place be where it pleases God, we are assured that the Entertainment and Joys do far surpass all human  
Compre-



Comprehension. Yet, tho' we cannot have *adequate* Conceptions of supreme Felicity, there are some Landmarks by which we may take imperfect Measures of that *Region of Promise*. The dim Light of natural Reason may afford us a Glimpse, or faint Prospect of those superlative Joys, and the *Opticks of Faith* will improve the View. We shall have the same Nature and Faculties there as here, but free from the least Alloy of Frailty and Imperfection. Our Souls shall display the radiant Brightness of their immortal Essence, with stronger *Vibrations* than the Sun, having no *internal Scum* of Concupiscence boiling out from the Centre of a depraved Will or erroneous Understanding, to blemish and stain those unspotted Orbs of Light; nor a terrene gross Body to eclipse and shut up their Splendors; but being ever bright and serene, they shall *shine through* their glorified and spiritual Bodies, as the Sun does, through the *pervious* Air, or at least as he does on a *bright* Cloud, which drinks in his Beams to reflect them abroad with a more *sensible* Glory. We shall then see, not by receiving the visible Species into the *narrow Glass* of an organized Eye, we shall then hear without the distinct and curious *Contexture* of the Ear. The Body shall then be *all Eye*, *all Ear*; *all Sense* in the whole, and every Sense in every Part. In a Word, it shall be all over a common *Sensorium*, and being made of the purest Æther, without the Mixture of any lower or grosser Element; the Soul shall, by one *undivided* Act, at once perceive all that Variety of Objects which now cannot, without several distinct Organs, and successive Actions and Passions, reach our Sense. From this *superlative* Tenuity and Claritude of our Bodies, will arise that *ineffable* Delicacy in the Sensation of the Soul, which will transport it with Delights infinitely transcending the *Height* of Mortal Voluptuousness;

tuousness ; nay, and even those more exalted Pleasures which the Virtuous sometimes enjoy here on Earth, as *Foretastes* of their future Beatitude in Heaven. What here excites but an ordinary Emotion of Joy in the Soul will there produce all *Raptures* and *Ecstasies*. We shall be always in *Paroxysms of Love* ; such are the transcending *Beauties* of that admirable Place ! and such the divinely amorous Bent of the Soul ! We shall be *always languishing*, yet ever enjoying what we languish for ; neither suffering the least Pain through the Want of Fruition, nor through any Satiety that shall attend it ; but through the *Vigour of an Immortal Activity*, we shall have ever fresh Desires and new Enjoyments, being dissolved in a *Circle of Beatitude*, without Measure or End.

Here on Earth Men generally strive to *monopolize* Pleasure to themselves, there being few of so generous a Temper as to be sensibly touched with Delight, that another should partake with them in that which they esteem Felicity : This is the *peculiar* Advantage of the Blessed in Heaven, that even in the Height of the Affairs of immortal Love and Empire, where they possess *eternal* Crowns and unfading Beauties, there is no such Thing to be found as a Rival or Competitor, but every *one's* Joy is enhanced by the Enjoyments of another. *Every one loves all, and all love every one*. Neither would their Felicity be perfect, could any Member of that happy Society be supposed not to have his full Proportion and Share of Beatitudes. So communicative is the Love and Joy of those holy Souls, that they must cease to love and enjoy themselves, should they desist from loving and rejoicing in the Happiness of their *Fellow-Citizens*. And if we may take our Measures of their Joys from our common Experiences here on Earth, it will be no small Augmentation of their Complacency, to find those *very Friendships*  
which



*which they had contracted here below, translated to the Mansions above, when they shall both see and know those whom they once loved on Earth, now to be made Denizens with them in Heaven, with what Ardours will they caress one another ! With what Transports of divine Affection will they mutually embrace, and vent those innocent Flames, which had so long lain smothering in the Grave ! How passionately rhetorical and elegant will their Expressions be, when their Sentiments which Death had frozen up, when he congeal'd their Blood, shall now be thawed again in the warm Airs of Paradise ! like Men that have escaped a common Shipwreck, and swim safe to the Shore, they will congratulate each other's Happiness with Joy and Wonder. Their first Addresses will be a Dialect of Interjections, and short Periods, the most pathetick Language of Surprise and high-wrought Joy ! And all their After-converse, even to Eternity, will be couched in the highest Spirits and Flowers of heavenly Oratory, with Hallelujahs intermixed.*

It much sweetens the Thoughts of Heaven to me, to remember that a Multitude of my Friends are already gone thither; to think such a Friend that died at such a Time, and such a one at another Time. *Ob ! what a Number of them could I name, and that all these I shall meet again. It is true, it is a Question with some, whether we shall know each other in Heaven, or no ? but 'tis none with me ; for surely there shall no Knowledge cease which now we have, but only that which implies our Imperfection, and what Imperfection can this imply ? Indeed, we shall not know each other after the Flesh, nor by Stature, Voice, Colour, or outward Shape ; nor by Terms of Affinity, and Consanguinity ; nor by Youth or Age, nor, I think, by Sex ; but by the Image of Christ and Spiritual Relation ; beyond Doubt, we shall know, and be known : Nor is it only*  
my

my old Friends, such as *Effex, Russel, Sydney, &c.* that I shall know in Heaven; but all the Saints of all Ages, whose Faces in the Flesh I never saw. *Luther*, in his last Sickness, being asked his Judgment, Whether we shall know one another in Heaven? answered thus, *Quid accidit Adamo? nunquam ille viderat Evam, &c. i. e.* How was it with *Adam*? He had never seen *Eve*, yet he asks not who she was, or whence she came; but says, *She is Flesh of my Flesh, and Bone of my Bone.* And how knew he that? Why, being indued with the true Knowledge of God, he so pronounced; after the same sort shall we be renewed by Christ in another Life; and we shall know our Parents, Wives, Children, &c. much more perfectly than *Adam* then knew *Eve*. In Heaven we shall not only see our *Elder Brother Christ*, but all our Kindred and Friends, that living here in his Fear, died in his Favour; for since our Saviour tells us, that the Children of the Resurrection shall be *ἰσάγγελοι*, equal to \*, or like the Angels, who yet, in the Visions of *Daniel* and *St. John*, appear to be acquainted with each other, since in the Parable of the *miserable Epicure*, and the happy Beggar, the Father of the Faithful is represented as knowing not only the Person and present Condition, but the past Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Instructor of the *Gentiles* confidently expects his converted and pious *Thessalonians* to be his Crown at that Great Day: Since these Arguments, besides divers others, are afforded us by the Scripture, we may safely conclude that we shall know each other in a Place where, since nothing requisite to Happiness can be wanting, we may well suppose that we shall not want so great a Satisfaction as that of being certainly happy in our other selves, our Friends.

\* Luke xx. 36. *Ibid.* xvi.



Thus far we may venture to speak of the lower Degrees of coelestial Beatitude, the *mutual Love and Entertainment of the Blessed*. But who has ever mounted to the highest Scale of heavenly Bliss? Let him come down and tell us the Mysteries wrapt up in Clouds, the Secrets hid within the Veil of inaccessible Light! Let him describe the Wonders of the beatific Vision, and say how deep the Rivers of Pleasure are, which run by God's Right Hand for evermore! For my Part, I must confess, I am lost in that Abyss of Wonders, and therefore modestly withdraw my Pen to Subjects more *domestick*, and within our Reach; and yet even here I shall but pass from *one Abyss to another*, since every Thing has a Depth in it not to be fathomed by our weightiest Sense, or most solid Reason.

I have often tried to dive into the *Profundities of Death*, but still I find my Intellect too light a Plummert; and the whole *Thread of Life*, though spun out in finest Speculations, would still prove far too short to reach that endless Bottom.

'Tis true, there have been Men that have tried, even *in Death itself*, to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost Faculties of Mind to discover what *this Passage is*; but they are none of them come back to tell us the *News*,

— No one was ever known to wake,  
Who once in Death's cold Arms a Nap did take.  
Lucret. Lib. iii.

*Canius Julius* being condemned by that *Beast Caligula*, as he was going to receive the Stroke of the Executioner, was asked by a *Philosopher*, Well, *Canius*, said he, whereabout is your Soul now? What is she doing? What are you thinking of? I was thinking, replied *Canius*, to keep myself  
I ready,

ready, and the Faculties of my Mind settled and fixed, to try if in this short and quick Instant of Death I could perceive the *Motion* of the Soul when she parts from the Body, and whether she has any Repentment at the Separation, that I may after come again to acquaint my Friends with it.

So that I fancy, there is a certain Way, by which some Men make Trial *what Death is*, but for my own Part, I could never yet find it out.

I have sometimes thought, what would I give for the *least Glimpse* of that invisible World, which the first Step I take out of this Body will present me with, and that there was nothing in the *whole Discourse of Death*, that I durst not boldly meet, and have therefore often attempted to *look him full in the Face*, that I might learn to die generously; but still, when it came to the Pinch, *Conscience, that makes Cowards of us all*, made one of me, and I was forced to shrink back with Shame.

Yet surely the Terror is not so much in *Death itself*, as in the *tragick Pomp* that goes before and after it. The tedious Discipline of Sicknes, the formal Visits of Relations and Friends, their melancholy Chat, the frightful *Harangue* of the Physician, and our own dismal Apprehensions, compose that horrid Scene which renders Death uncomfortable. When the poor Patient, that perhaps may yet *outlive his Fears of Death*, and see Millions drop into the Grave before him, yet dies a thousand Deaths, in his hag-ridden Fancy, and makes his Bed his Grave, by the Strength of an abused Imagination.

It is only Fancy gives Death those hideous Shapes we think him in; for indeed, Death is no more than a soft and easy Nothing, or rather *Nature's Play-day*. I firmly think it is no more to die, than to be born; we felt no Pain coming into the  
World,



World, nor shall we in the Act of leaving it; though in the first, one would believe, there were more of Trouble than in the latter; for we *cry coming into the World*, but quietly and calmly leave it. What is Death *but a ceasing to be what we were before we were*; we are kindled and put out; to cease to be, and not to begin to be, is the same Thing. Methinks it is but the other Day I came into the World, and anon I am leaving it; for though I am but in my thirtieth Year, and at present in perfect Health and Strength, yet I look upon myself as a Man that has one Foot in the Grave already; for David says, *Seventy is the Age of Man*, and I have lived near thirty Years of that Time already. The longest of my Designs now, is not above a Years Extent: I think of nothing now but ending, taking my last Leave of every Place I depart from. *Alas! there is no fooling with Life, when it is once turned beyond thirty.* Silence was a full Answer of him, that being asked what he thought of human Life, said nothing, turned him round and vanished. *Oh! how Time runs away!* and we are dead before we have Time to think ourselves alive. One doth but breakfast here, another dine; he that lives longest does but sup; we must all go to Bed in another World, *therefore good Night to you here, and good Morrow hereafter.*

Indeed our whole Life is but one often repeated Step to Death, and we are as near it at the first Minute of our setting out, as at a hundred Years end; for Death either keeps an even collateral Pace with us from our very Birth, or at least, he marches but *one Step behind us* all the Way of our Life; so that when the appointed Time is come for him to execute his Commission, he soon can reach forth his Hand, arrest us, and stop our further Journey. *Man, in the Vigour and Prime of his Years*, fancies himself in the Midst of a vast

Plain ; he looks behind him, and numbers all the weary Steps of Life he has already taken ; persuades himself, that Death must also measure the same Space of Years in his Pursuit, before he can overtake him ; then turning his Eyes before, he sees a *boundless Tract*, an indeterminate Set of Years ; being thus deluded by the enchanted Prospect, he rushes on, and bids Defiance to pale languid Death, imagining he sees him lagging afar off, at the first Entrance of the *wide-stretched Waste* ; whereas the nimble *Skeleton* is as far advanced as he, only keeps out of Sight, and will never be seen, till the very Moment he gives the fatal Stroke. To whatsoever *Light* Man turns his Face, Death, like his *Shadow*, whips behind him still, and is at his Back, but never will *face him till the latest Gasp* ; and he that can stoutly bear his Looks for that one Moment, shall never see him more to all Eternity. It is but the fear of this one Moment's Pain, that makes our Lives so uneasy all along. And I am really ashamed of this incorrigible Folly of Mortals, who spend so many Years in painful Disquisitions, how to protract the Pain of *one poor Moment*, and undergo ten times more Labour to escape it, than they can possibly feel in undergoing it. I admire the Resolution of the *Indian Wives*, who, in Contempt of Death, scorn to survive their Husband's *Funeral Pile*, but with a chaste Zeal, and an undaunted Courage, throw themselves into the Flames, as if they were then going to the Nuptial Bed. Certainly they calculate aright, who reckon the Day of our Death the Day of our Nativity, since we are then born to the Possession of immortal Life. For this Reason, I honour the Memory of *Ludovicus Cartesius*, the *Paduan* Lawyer, who, in his last Will and Testament, ordered, that no sad Funeral Rites should be observed for him, but that his Corpse should be attended with *Musick and Joy* to the Grave ;



Grave; and as if it were the Day of his Espousals, he commanded that twelve Suits of gay Apparel should be provided, instead of Mourning, for an equal number of Virgins, who should usher his Body to the Church.

It will not, I hope, be an unpardonable Transi-  
tion, if I *start back* from the melancholy Horrors  
of *Death*, to the innocent Comforts of *human*  
*Life*, and from the immortal Nuptials of this *Ita-*  
*lian*, pass to the mortal Emblem, the Rites of  
Matrimony, the Happiness of *female Society*, and  
our Obligations to Women. It is an uncourtly  
Virtue which admits of no Profelytes but Men de-  
voted to Coelibacy, and he is a Reproach to his Pa-  
rents, who shuns the Entertainments of *Hymen*, the  
blissful Amours of the Fair Sex, without which he  
himself had not gained so much as the Post of a *Cy-*  
*pher* in the Numeration of Mankind, though he now  
makes a Figure too much in Nature's Arithmetick,  
since he would put a stop to the Rule of *Multiplica-*  
*tion*. He is worse than *Numa Pompilius*, who ap-  
pointed but a set Number of Virgins, and those were  
free to marry, after they had guarded the sa-  
cred Fires the Term of four Years: Whereas if  
his morose Example were followed, all Women  
should turn *Vestals* against their Wills, and be con-  
secrated to a *peevish Virginity* during their Lives.  
I wonder at the unnatural Fancy of such as could  
wish we might procreate like Trees, as if they  
were *ashamed of the Act*, without which they had  
never been capable of such an extravagant Thought;  
or like *Alphonfus*, King of *Spain*, would correct the  
Institutions of Heaven, and say, Had they been  
present with God, when he commanded *Adam* and  
*Eve* to encrease and multiply, they would have pro-  
posed a better Method for Generation. Certainly  
he that created us, and has riveted the *Love of Wo-*  
*men* in the very Centre of our Natures, never  
gave

gave us those passionate Desires to be our incurable Torment, but only as Spurs to our Wit and Virtue, that by the Dexterity of the one, and the Integrity of the other, we might merit and gain the *darling Object* which should consummate our earthly Happiness.

I do not patronize the Smoak of those *Dunghill-Passions*, who only court the Possessions of an Heiress, and fall in Love with her Money. *This is to make a Market of Women*, and prostitute the noblest Affection of our Souls to the sordid Ends of Avarice. Neither do I commend the softer Aims of those, who are wedded only to the *charming Linaments* of a beautiful Face, a clear Skin, or a well shaped Body. It is only the Virtue, Discretion, and *good Humour* of a Woman could ever captivate me, and I am blessed in a Mate, who has her Share both of these and the other exterior Ornaments.

I hate the cynical Flout of those who can afford Women no better Title than *necessary Evils*, and the lewd poetical Licence of him who made this Anagram, *Uxor & Orcus—idem*. That Orator whispered the *Doctrine of Devils*, who said, Were it not for the Company of Women, Angels would come down and dwell among us. I rather think, were it not for such ill natured Fellows as he, Women themselves would prove Angels.

It is an ungrateful Return thus to abuse the *gentle Sex*, who are the Moulds in which all the Race of Adam are cast; as if they deserved no better Treatment at our Hands than we usually give to Saffron-Bags and Verde-Bottles, which are thrown into a Corner when the Wine and Spice are taken out of them. The *Pagan Poet* was little better than a Murderer, who allowed but two good Hours to a Woman:



Τὴν μίαν ἐν Θαλάμῳ τὴν μίαν ἐν Θανάτῳ.

*Unam in Thalamo, alteram in Tumulo.*

For my Part, I should esteem the World but a *Desert*, were it not for the Society of the *Fair Sex*; and the most polished Part of Mankind would appear but like Hermits in Masquerade, or a Kind of *civilized Satyrs*; so imperfect and unaccomplished is our Virility, without the Re-union of our *lost Rib*, that substantial and integral Part of ourselves. Those who are thus disjointed from Women, seem to inherit *Adam's Dreams*, out of which nothing can awake them but the Embraces of their own living Image, the fair Traduct of the first Metamorphosis in the World, *the Bone converted into Flesh*. They are always in Slumbers and Trances, ever separated from themselves, in *a wild Pursuit* of an intolerable Loss; nor can any Thing fix their volatile Desires, but the powerful Magnetism of some charming *Daughter of Eve*. These are the Centres of all our Desires and Wishes, the true *Pandora* that alone can satisfy our longing Appetites, and fill us with *Gifts and Blessings*; *in them we live before we breathe*, and when we have tasted the *vital Air*, it is but to die an amorous Death, that we may live more pleasantly in them again: *They are the Guardians of our Infancy, the Life and Soul of our Youth, the Companions of our riper Years, and the Cherishers of our old Age*. From the Cradle to the Tomb we are wrapt in a Circle of Obligations to them, for their Love and good Offices; and he is a Monster in Nature who returns them not the Caresses of an *innocent Affection*, the spotless Sallies of Virtue and Gratitude. *Love is the Soul of the World*, the vital Prop of the Elements; it is the Cement of human Society, the strongest Fence.

Fence of Nature ; Earth would be a Hell without it, neither can there be any Heaven where this is absent.

Yet I am no *Advocate for those general Lovers*, who, not content to let this active Passion run within the lawful Channel of chaste Marriage, swell it up with irregular Tides, and wanton Floods of Lust, till it wash away the Banks of Reason and Morality ; find out new Passages and Rivulets, encroaching on other Men's Possessions, or at least dilating on the general Waste of the weaker Sex, who ought to be as Gardens enclosed, or holy Ground, not to be prophaned by the Access of every bold Intruder.

I approve not the incestuous Mixtures of the *Chinese*, where the Brother marries the Sister, or next a-kin, nor the sensual Latitude of the *Mahometans*, who allow every Man four Wives, and as many Concubines as he can maintain. But above all, I detest the wild and brutal Liberty of that *Philosopher*, who, in his Idea of human Happiness, conceived a promiscuous Copulation *ad Libitum* to be a necessary Ingredient of our Bliss.

On the other Side, my Regards to that *Sex* are not circumscribed within such narrow Limits, as to exclude any from our Conversation and Friendship, that, by any warrantable Title, can lay a just Claim to it. I would have our Commerce with Females *as general* as is their Number that deserve it, whose Knowledge and Virtue will be a sufficient Security from *criminal Familiarities*, and from the Scandals of the World. There are among that Sex, as among Men, good and bad, virtuous and vicious, and a prudent Man will so level his Choice, as not to stain his Reputation, or hazard his Integrity. It is no small Point of Discretion, I own, to *regulate our Friendships with Women*, and to walk evenly on the Borders and very Ridge of a *Passion*, whose next Step is a Precipice of Flames  
not



not kindled from the Altar of Virtue: However, it is not impossible to *conserve Innocence on the Frontiers of Vice, there is no Difference of Sex among Souls*, and a masculine Spirit may inhabit a Woman's Body. It is disengenuous to rob Virtue of the Advantage it receives from Beauty, which makes it appear like Diamonds chaced in Gold, and gives it a greater Lustre. *Reason it self will appear more eloquent in the Mouth of a fair Maid, than in that of the most florid Orator*; and there are no Figures in all the System of Rhetorick so moving and forcible as the *peculiar Graces of that Sex*. I am of Opinion that Men can boast of no Endowments of the Mind, which Women possess not in as great, if not a greater Eminency. There have been *Muses as well as Amazons*, and no Age or Nation but has produced some Females renowned for their Wisdom or Virtue; which makes me conclude that the Conversation of Women is no less usual than pleasant, and that the Danger which attend their Friendships and Commerce, are recompensed by vast Advantages.

But whatever may be adduced against the *Friendships* we contract with Women, there is not, in all the *Magazine of Detraction*, any Weapon of Proof against the mutual Intimacies of our *own Sex*, the *generous Endearments of Souls truly masculine and vertuous, united by Sympathies and Magnets, whose Root is in Heaven*. No Panegyricks can reach the Worth of these divine Engagements, since they admit not of any Mediocrity, but derive their *Value only from their Excess*. I have been always slow and cautious in contracting Amities, lest I should run the Risk of his Mistake, who, while he thought he had an Angel by the Hand, held the Devil by the Foot: But where I have once *pitched* my Affection, I love without Reserve or Rule. I never entertain without Suspicion the warm Professions of

Love which some Men are apt to make at first Sight ; such *Mushroom-Friendships* have no deep Root, and therefore most commonly wither as soon as they are formed. Yet I deny not but that there are some *secret Marks* and Signatures, which Souls ordained for Love and Friendship can read in each other at a Glance, by which that noble Passion is excited, that afterwards displays itself in more apparent Characters. This is the silent Language of *Platonick Love*, wherein the Eye supplies the Office of the Tongue ; *it is the Rhetorick of amorous Spirits*, wherein they make their Court without a Word. There are some lasting Friendships which owe their Birth to such an Interview, but their Growth and Fastness proceeds from other Circumstances, being cherished by frequent Conversation, repeated good Offices, and an inviolate Fidelity, which are the only proper and substantial Aliment of Love. It is impossible to fix a durable Friendship where-ever we place a *transient Inclination*, because of the insuperable Necessities which divide particular Men from each other's Commerce or Knowledge, after they have begun to love. In the Orb of this Life Men are like the Planets, which now and then cast friendly Aspects on each other *en Passant* : But following the Motions of the greater Sphere of Providence, they are again separated, their Influences dissolved, and new Amours commenc'd ; but I would have my Friendship resemble the *fixed Stars* and Constellations, who, in the eternal Revolution, never part Company or Interests.

I have ever looked on those Men to be but *one Step different from Beasts*, whose Love is confined only to their own Families or Kindred. Such a narrow Affection deserves not to be rank'd in the *Prædicament of Humanity*. My Love is communicative, it makes a large Progress, and extends  
itself



itself to Strangers ; it takes in Men of different Humours and Complexions, Customs, and Languages, it refuses none that have the *Face of Men* ; but with wide opened Arms embraces all that bear the Stamp of human Nature. And I have this, *peculiar in my Temper*, that I find not the least Reluctancy in loving and doing Good to my *Enemies*. That which costs others so much Labour and Toil to persuade themselves to, is to me as familiar and easy, as to laugh at a ridiculous Object, and I esteem it not so properly a Virtue in myself, as a Gift of Nature, the Effect of my Constitution.

Yet I cannot pretend to such an *universalized Spirit*, as to be without my *Antipathies*. I esteem Hatred to be as necessary and allowable a Passion as Love, provided it be exercised on its proper Objects ; since as the one fastens us to those Things which procure our Happiness, so the other snatches us from what would be the Cause of our Misery. I observe, that these *contrary Faculties* are inherent in all Creatures ; neither could the Creation subsist, were it not for the Discords as well as the Agreements of the Elements. The whole Universe subsists by the *Opposition of its Parts*, and the Epitome of it, our Microcosm, is preserved by its *intestine Divisions* : So that I cannot apprehend a more immediate Way for the supreme Architect to overthrow his Works, than by diffusing that *Ne-pantbe* through the Elements, which should compose their Quarrels ; for they would no sooner cease to hate their *Contraries*, but they would also desist from loving themselves ; and having thus lost the Cement which fastens them together in this exquisite Order, they must necessarily return to their primitive Chaos, out of which they were extracted.

However, I will not, from these *innocent Frauds of inanimate Creatures*, draw Arguments to countenance in myself a Hatred which is criminal, being assured that, among those *various Aversions* which molest the Quiet of Men, there is hardly one which is not against Reason or Morality. Every Creature bears in its Essence the Stamp of infinite Goodness; and it were gross Impiety to calumniate any of those Works on which God himself has bestowed an *universal Panegyrick*, when he pronounced them all to be Good. They are all lovely in their Order, and those which squamish Fancies esteem the most odious, have Qualities which claim our Love and Admiration. Those *venemous Creatures* which we shun, as the inveterate Enemies of our Race, deserve our Caresses instead of our Spight, since the Service they afford us, equals the Hurt we receive from them, and the most efficacious Medicines are sometimes compounded of the *fiercest Poisons*. In strict speaking, the *Devils* themselves are not the Object of my Hatred, according to their Essence, though they are so by the Malice of their Will. They still retain their *natural Perfections*, and the Goodness of their Essence remains the same as it was before their Fall. Their Vigour, Beauty, and intellectual Accomplishments, have suffered no Detriment from the Depravity of their Affections; but remain untouched, as when they *shone among the Hierarchies above*; and though God detests and punishes them for their Crimes, yet he himself loves and *conserves their Essence*. There is nothing therefore in *Heaven, Earth, or Hell*, but *Sin*, that deserves our Hatred; with all Things else we may be enamoured; and we ought to hate this Monster so much the more, in that by disordering our Nature, it has planted in us those *Antipathies and Aversions* which



which make us peevish at the Works of God, and hate those Things which we ought to love.

But among all the *Species of Hatred*, I tremble at that which is exercised against our own Race, because I find none so violent, none so inexorable, as one Man against another. They are not content with the most furious Sallies of this Passion during their Lives, but to consummate the Height of their Malice, they willingly involve themselves in Death. With *Atreus* they take Delight in their own Ruin, provided *Thyestes* may be crushed in it too. Nay, this Passion is *immortal*, and descends into the very Grave. The Antipathies of *Eteocles* and *Polenius* were translated to the other World, their Hatred *survived their Breath*, it lived in their Ashes, and would not suffer their divided Flames to mix in the same Funeral Pile. Above all, I abhor the *Italians* inflexible Cruelty, who bequeath their Hatred as an Inheritance to their Children, adjuring them to eternal Enmity, with Curses on such of their Off-spring as shall ever make Peace with their Foes.

I quarrel not with that *Logick* by which we call a Toad venomous. It would prove but a thin *Sophistry*, that should impose on us the Safety of the Experiment ; and I doubt our best *Metaphysics* would make but a weak Antidote against the Force of its Poison. I am not fond of *quibbling* myself into so dangerous an Absurdity, under the Protection of a refined Theory, whose Practice would convince me of a foolish Madness, and that I were neither good Philosopher nor Divine. Yet I cannot say, I hate even this Creature, which is become the Proverb of human Hatred : For as much as it carries with it, in its Life and Motion, the Character and Impression of a *divine Artificer* ; especially for this Reason, that we have no Cause to believe it ever sinned, and consequently there-  
upon

upon maintains and performs the End and Design of its Creation, which, though it be in a lower Sphere, has this Prerogative beyond Mankind, that it never yet transgressed the Rules, nor violated the Laws of its Maker. Nor can I imagine whence our Reflections upon such Creatures should arise, but from a mistaken Knowledge of ourselves, and a perfect Ignorance of the Nature of all Things beside. It is under the Prejudice of Education, and the prevailing Influence of Custom that we labour, and to which we owe the greatest and most detested Errors of our Life. Have not some People lived upon that, and deliciously too, that is another Man's Poison? Did not *Mithridates* take Poison, till the strongest Confection of that Kind would not do his Business when he wanted it? It is to that we are to ascribe the Mischiefs of human Life; for if we could once forsake the *false Guide* we have been used to, and consult our own Reason, there is nothing would seem strange to us, nothing uneasy, nothing dreadful. Therefore, after I have a little descanted upon this Subject, in order to rectify our Judgments, and reform our Practices, I shall cross the Cudgels, and end this Discourse.

It is impossible fully to set forth the large Dominion and uncontrollable Power of *Custom* and common *Usage*, together with the vast and long *Series of Difficulties and Mistakes*, we lie liable and exposed to upon that Account. It is the Master of the Mint, and *coins Words and Names* for Things according to its own Pleasure; sometimes not at all expressive of the Nature of the Thing intended, which have no further Signification than what they obtain by repeated Use and Frequency. We know very well that nothing in its own Nature is *accidental*, and in respect of the supreme Author, all Things are regular and designed; but in Reference to us, whose *purblind Reason* can reach no deeper than



than the Outside, whose Sight is not sharp enough to dive and penetrate into the Causes of Things, many Things prove fortuitous. When Events strange and unexpected fall out, such as we had nor the least Apprehension or Suspicion of beforehand, we call it *Chance and Accident* ; but the Misery is, we terminate there, and never look to the Hand that ordered it. We attribute that to *Fortune*, which is the Effect of a wise and skilful *Agent*. When our Expectations are baulked, and our Aims frustrated, we cry it was done by Chance, and think that is all ; whereas we ought to consider, that God oftentimes delights to make our *Wisdom Foolishness*, and thereby gives us Caution not to trust our own Foresight ; since the Events of all Things are in his Power, and at his Disposal. He will be *eyed in his Providence*, and make Men know that the Success of all their Undertakings is at his Discretion ; that he is the sole Governor of the World ; that he will be sought unto for his Blessing, and that we must wait his Pleasure, and ascribe the Glory of all to him. But this ought not to encourage us in a supine and slothful Negligence, that because God does all Things according to the good Pleasure of his Will, we have nothing to do, but expect he should bring Things about for Advantage and Satisfaction. For though *Grace* loves to magnify itself in the *weak*, and exerts its Efficacy in mean and contemptible Subjects, yet that is no Ground for us to stand *idle*, or sit *whining* and bewailing our Misfortunes, and think *God* should bear our Burden himself. No, these remarkable Efforts of the *divine* Power are to encourage our Stedfastness, and confirm us in the Belief of its undoubted Presence, when our Designs and Endeavours are conformable. It is impertinent and ridiculous to expect Relief from others, when we are wholly unactive to procure it ourselves. We ought  
to

to make use of the best Means he affords us, and then, resigning ourselves up to him, attend the Success. If it be according to our Desires, we must gratefully acknowledge, and thank him for it: If contrary, we must in all Humility submit, confessing his *Wisdom* infinitely to exceed *ours*, and that he knows what is better for us than we ourselves. This is what *Divinity* teaches us, and could we be instructed by it, might greatly advance our Peace and Tranquility in this World.

This is a Strain of Prudence, I know, Mankind can hardly be skrewed up to. The Infirmary of human Nature is such, that every Shock of unexpected Adversity makes it stagger. We are ready to turn *Recreants*, and yield the Day to every puny Evil that, unlooked for, attacks us. It is well if we can support our *Spirits*, and preserve our Courage, against a fore-seen Danger; but to be *surprised* by a Misfortune, is to be *overcome*. I am of Opinion, the *Combat* would not be difficult, nor the *Victory* uncertain, were we but better acquainted with *ourselves*, and knew our own Strength, and how to apply ourselves to the *Work*. Some torment themselves with *distracting* Apprehensions afore-hand, and *doubly* possess their Misery in *Reality*, and *Fancy*; others immediately sink under the Weight, as soon as they feel it on their *Shoulders*; others fly out into *Despair*, as if the World were at an End, and they were never to see a good Day again. For my Part, as I cannot altogether boast of *Insensibility* under my Afflictions at *present*, so neither can I complain of being too *apprehensive* of them at a *distance*: I can see the *Cloud* gathering, without much *Consternation*; and comfort myself with this, that perhaps some Wind or other may blow it away; or, I am not infallibly sure it shall break on my Head: I shall have  
enough



enough of it whenever it comes, and do not so much provide to *avoid* it, as consider of what Importance it may be, whether I escape it or no. Perhaps it is my *Fault*; but I am willing to indulge it. I have no other Means. I consider it without too *much Concern*. I approach it without *Horror*. I bring it home to *myself*, and treat with it as *present*, when perhaps it may never come to pass. I inure myself to it, and harden myself in it; by which Means it becomes familiar to me; that when it overtakes me, I claim *Acquaintance* with it. This *dulls* the Edge, and *blunts* the Sting of an Affliction, which otherwise, it may be, I should never be able to *sustain*.

But let us examine *Reason*, and see what Arms she can furnish us with, for our Defence against these violent Assaults. *She* would, in a great Measure, do our Business for us, could we take *her* Advice, and were there not *private* Enemies *within*, that compel us to surrender before we try our Strength. If our *Passions* were disarmed and subdued, and brought into Obedience to *Reason*, we might maintain our Ground with less Difficulty, and *bid* Defiance to *Fortune*. This ought to be the *Subject* of our Courage. In this we shall appear more than *Conquerors*. Let us stop these *Beginnings*, and our Business is soon done. Nothing in Nature can be more tumultuous and irregular than our own Passions. And with what Face can any Man pretend to withstand the sudden and violent Attempts of *Fortune*, that has no Guard against the inward and unruly Motions of his own *Soul*? Whither do we see some People hurried, by the precipitate Streams of *Anger*, *Love*, *Hatred*, &c. even upon a bare Apprehension and Jealousy, without the least Discovery of Cause or Motive? I have seen the accidental breaking of a *Glass*, the Loss of a *Groat*, transport some to such a *Degree*,

L

that

that they could hardly compose and recover themselves for *six* Hours after. They fall foul upon all, without Distinction ; all Company must be disturbed where-ever they come, it is impossible to give a calm uninterrupted Answer to any Thing that is asked them. They stamp, stare, burn, rave, fret, roar, as if the *Day of Judgment* was at hand, and they were a going *Quick* to *Pluto*. Wherefore do you wring your Hands ? Why are those Tears ? Why look you so discontented ? You have lost your best *Friend*. A dear *Relation*. You are afraid you shall be *poor*. The *Wheel* is come upon you. You cannot see how your Estate will hold out, and know not how to live when that is gone. *Poor Wretch* ! The plain Truth is, you have lost your Reason. What is become of your Religion, your Faith, your Confidence ? Is this the Upshot of all your Talk of relying on Providence, of trusting God ? Do you not *belye* yourselves ? Is he not able ? Is he not willing ? Why are you not *calm* ? Why are you not *quiet* ? They may talk as long as they please ; but it must be somewhat more than a few fine Words, and pathetical Expressions, that must convince me of the Sincerity of their Profession, who distrust Providence upon every slender Occasion. *Are not those brave Men, think you ?* Grace delights to accompany a vigorous and active Soul, and carries it out to perform Atchievements beyond its own Strength, and above its Hopes ; but unless our *Endeavours* comport with our *Words*, Providence disdains us as unworthy of his Care. What does that Soldier deserve that brags of singly conquering whole *Armies*, and turns his Back at the first Charge, nay, runs away perhaps before the Enemy is in view, through a slavish Despair of his own Ability to resist ? *Our whole Life is a Warfare*. We have many Adversaries to encounter ; some *face* us in the *open* Field, and give us Leisure to prepare, and



and require a fixed and determinate Resolution to oppose them. Some surprize us between the *Hedge* and the *Ditch*, as they say, and expect we should be perpetually armed, and upon our *Watch*. These are *Trials* sent on purpose to evidence our Constancy ; and if we bear up manfully, our Courage shall be *seconded* and fortified with an *Almighty* Assistance ; yet it is a common Observation, that none are more apt to repine than such whose *Tongues* can run nimbly in *Matters* of this Nature.

To what Purpose then, should we torment ourselves and others ? And seeing we are *unable* to govern ourselves, or our Affairs, why do we not deliver up ourselves to the *Conduet* of him who governs the World ? Why do we macerate our Souls and Bodies, when our vain Imaginations become successless, and ineffectual ? Since there is a wise and intelligent Moderator, who will bring Things about according to the Methods of his own *superlative* Wisdom, in Defiance of human *Craft* and Policy. We may lay the *Scheme* of our Affairs as rationally as we can devise, and back it with our utmost Power and Diligence, and then we have satisfied our *Office*, and done our Duty ; for in spite of all, the *Issue* and Result of all must finally and arbitrarily depend upon the absolute Will and Pleasure of another.

I am persuaded, *Custom* and *Example* lead us into more Errors and Mistakes than any Thing beside. I find we submit to them with great Ease and little Reluctance ; nay, and think ourselves very excusable in all the *Slips* we make, when we follow that *Guide*. Our very Dispositions, methinks, and natural Inclinations, are subdued by them ; and in many Things drawn to a Compliance, even against their own *Biafs*. They *habituate* us to Actions, however ungrateful and disrelishing

at their first Appearance, and assist us to perform them with *Smoothness* and *Facility*. I find the Path *rugged* when I am out of my usual *Way*, and we are contented to jogg on quietly in a *wrong* Road, rather than put ourselves to the Trouble of finding out the *Right*. It is *brutish* and unmanly not to examine what we do, and to be able to give no better Account of our Actions, than that it is the *Custom* of the *Place*. To what Purpose serve our rational and discerning Faculties, if we suspend their Exercise, and not suffer them to have their *Play*, in their natural and proper *Velitations*? Why should we debase our own Judgments by a slavish Submission to common Usage. I then frustrate the End of my Being; for one of the main Businesses I have *here*, is to acquire the *Knowledge of myself*. And it is for my own Actions I shall be immediately accountable, and not those of other Men. *Example*, I confess, may be of great Use, but then it must be managed according to *Discretion*. It may serve as a *Caution*, but never as a *Rule*: It may be admitted into *Council*, but not entrusted with the *Government*. It may prove an excellent *Monitor*, but a very wretched *Dictator*. Nor when thus qualified and circumscribed, can it be of any Advantage to us, without a previous Knowledge and Understanding of ourselves. It is the *wise Man* only, that knows his own Strength, that shall use it with Success. And as such an one has less Need of it, so he shall be further removed from its insinuating and usurping *Dominion*.

I would therefore begin first with *myself*, ransack my own Soul, and exactly know its Frame and Constitution. I would *muster* my own Forces first, and *dive* into the Truth of Things, and put my Understanding upon the Exercise of its Function, and give my Judgment its full *Swing*. Truth shall be



be the Subject of my *Disquisition*, and the End of my *Enquiry*.

If we look into the *Behaviour* and Practice of most Men, we shall find *Fancy* to have the *Ascendant* over them ; the *Dread* of not succeeding shakes their *Resolutions* ; they are *timorous* and *inconstant*, because they neither know *themselves*, nor what they would be at. Every unsuspected Danger scares them out of their Wits ; they create *Monsters* in their own *Brains*, and supposing them above their Strength to resist, they *slavishly* resign the little Reason they would seem to be *Masters* of, to every *uncommon* Evil, not knowing how to withstand or avoid it. It behoves me then to examine the Tendency of my own Desires, and see whether any Thing *substantial* hath affected my Mind. Hath any Man met with any Thing that gives him a full and compleat Satisfaction ? Or does he not find his Passions and Appetite to encrease upon him, and require somewhat more even in the very Possession and Enjoyments of their Objects ? We penetrate no deeper than the *Surface*, and acquiesce in a *superficial* Glance. We ought therefore to come out of the *Dark*, that we may see to walk in the *Light*. We must *unlearn* what we *think* we know, to be taught what we *ought* to know. *The first Advance towards Wisdom is to renounce our Folly*. Our Minds can never be filled with sound and wholesome Knowledge, until they are first dispossessed of their Prejudices.

I hate to hear People cry out, Why cannot I do *thus* and *thus* ? Why cannot I manage an Affair like this or that Man ? I will tell you ; because you are a Fool, and do not *know yourself* ; because you cannot be contented as you are : Uneasiness and Dissatisfaction under a Man's *present* Condition, is an assured and manifest Proof he would carry himself as *unhandsomely* in *another*. Nature  
and

and Providence hath designed every Man his *Task*, and that which is most *suitable* to him. He that cannot govern a *Sculler*, would make an improper *Commander* of a Man of *War*. It would, I profess, make a Man laugh till he expires, to come into a *Coffee-house*, and behold a *Pack* of *Cits* prating of *Politicks* and State-Matters, as if they were all *Machiavels* and *Mazarines*. Had I been the *King*, says one, that has not Wit enough to commend him for a *Rat-catcher*, I would have done *thus*. Had I been in Council, cries another, I would never have advised *that*. *Ye doating Coxcombs!* Why do ye not regulate your *Families*? Why do you suffer your *Wives* to wear the *Breeches*? Why do your *Daughters* run away with the *Bullies*, and your *Apprentices* get to Bed to their *Mistresses*? Amend yourselves first, correct your *domestick* Exorbitancies, exemplify your *Prudence* in rectifying your private Affairs, deal faithfully in your Trades, and become honest Men, and then you shall have Leave to prate. I have often considered with myself, what should be the Reason Men are so often disappointed of their Ends, and baulked in their Hopes: They undertake more than they can answer for, and, by a ridiculous Presumption, enter upon Business they can never accomplish. It is Ignorance that is the Ground of all our Miscarriages, and *Pride* puts us upon Attempts too weighty for our *Shoulders*; they are *Twin-Sisters*, and the latter is a natural Companion of the former. We have every one of us, within our own proper *Sphere*, more Work cut out than we know well how to affect; which one Consideration, could it but duly take Place, would be of Force enough to discourage us from loading our Shoulders with unnecessary Burthens.

I am confident nothing more betrays the *Weakness* and *Infirmity* of human Nature, than *Impatience* under our present Circumstances, and a busy Curiosity



osity of prying into the Affairs of others. It is the Employment of a weak Understanding, and a Soul wholly unacquainted with itself, to be impetuously hurried with a Desire after Things altogether beyond our proper Province. Surely Nature hath better provided for us than we can for ourselves, and did we but *regularly* follow her Dictates, we should not be so often compelled to our Shifts ; but the Mischief is, we are too much prone to *admire* every Thing we do not possess ; a *Vanity intolerable* ; which, did it not shroud itself under the Cover of *Custom*, would soon be abhorred and banished out of the World ; but *common Practice* is become its *Advocate*, and irresistibly pleads its Defence in a vulgar *Judicature*. Should we not think a *Neighbour* a little cracked brained, who would entertain us an Hour or two together with an exact and accurate *Description* of some foreign Country, when all the while he does not know the Way to his own Parish-Church ? *Preposterous Madness !* to pretend to know every Thing, and yet be totally ignorant of ourselves.

It is enough already that I have lived for *others*, let me at last return Home, and do somewhat for myself: Time flies away, Nature decays, and I shall soon find myself most unfit for the Work, when I shall stand most in Need of Strength to do it. To what Purpose is it we are so busily concerned in *exotick Affairs*, Things neither consistent with our *present* Peace, nor conducive to our *future* Happiness.

When I take a Review, and give my Mind Leave, as she would often do, did I not impertinently divert her, to recollect her own Thoughts, and make a serious Reflection on the *Employments* and *Enjoyments* too of her past Life, good God ! how full of Vanity, and Inquietude, and Dissatisfaction, do they appear ? enforcing from me a

Sub-

*Subscription* to this fatal Truth, that it is I myself have prevented my own Happiness, and by a senseless Extravagance, and stupid Self-Ignorance, undermined the Tranquility of a *Life* that might have been more *peaceable*, and consequently more *pleasant*, than the present Prospect of any Circumstances now warrant me to expect. I could now almost hate, and curse myself, for my *Folly*, and *Self-Love* itself would justify my Indignation; but that is not the Way; Prudence suggests another Course. Let me therefore at least preserve what I enjoy, if I cannot recover what I have lost; let the Consideration of what is past awaken my Diligence for the *future*. We have been Fools, and who has not? Let Wisdom make Amends, and cancel the *Shame*. I have learned at least this by the Bargain, to know my Distemper, which makes the Cure less difficult. There is somewhat of *Good* to be extracted from every Thing, and Prescriptions in Appearance contrary, have eventually proved themselves *friendly* to Nature.

To do our own proper Business, and to know *our selves*, is the only important Employment we have in this World. And he that can do the *latter*, will never be at a loss in the *former*. He will avoid all superfluous Undertakings. He can tell how to reform the Extravagance of his Passions, and correct the Impetuosity of an *hot* Nature. He will never be obliged to prosecute the Concerns of *another*, while any Thing of his own lies on his Hands. Every Thing he engages in shall be brought to Perfection; because he attempts no more than he *understands*, and is able to accomplish. This Consideration would fix our Thoughts, restrain and bridle our Desires, and limit our Fancies within their due Bounds.

It has been my Observation ever since I have been acquainted with the World, that most Men are *Strays*, they are guilty of a perpetual *Trespass*,  
and



and a *Clausum fregit* may be charged upon us *all*. We see how foolish and impertinent soever Men ordinarily are, yet they observe a *Decorum*, and put a Constraint upon their Words and Actions, when they are in the Company of Persons reputed *wise* and *good*; and an Affront put upon them before *such*, will be more highly resented, than if they were all of their own *Stamp* and *Rank*. So should we learn to be acquainted, and reverence ourselves, and dare to think or speak nothing in our own Presence, we should be ashamed of before a *Solomon* or a *Cato*. Let us then for once become our own Masters: Let us consult *ourselves*, and take Advice of our *Reason*: It is she alone will instruct us, not only what we have to do, but also govern us in the Management of our Actions, with much less Solicitude, and much more Facility. The Sovereignty is her *Due*, our *Passions* are her *Slaves*, and she ought to have the *principal*, if not the *only* Concurrence in all our Attempts. Leave the Business wholly to her, and you shall find she will render the Event at least excusable, let it be what it will.

How vain is it thus to *shun* ourselves, and follow the *Multitude*! That Man must certainly deserve *Bedlam*, who employs all his Time in examining the Estates of others, and values himself for knowing the particular Concerns of the noblest *Families* of the Nation, when yet he is a *Stranger* to what passes under his own *Roof*, and can never find Leisure to adjust his own *private* Accounts. For my Part, I am ashamed of myself, that the little Knowledge I have acquired of my own Temper, should serve only to shew the Necessity I have of knowing more. It is difficult for us to arrive at any tolerable Information of *another's* Humour; and to give a just and regular Estimate of him, we must follow him close, pursue all his Windings and Turn-

M

ings,

ings, trace him through all his Variations, Forms, and Appearances. Thus we must do with *ourselves*, nor is the Labour quite so perplexed. Mankind is all *Labyrinth* and *Disguise*, and never shews the same Face two Hours together. I know myself better than all the Men in the World know me, and can be more just and faithful according to Truth, in my Judgment and Censure. They set up a *Rule*, and try all Complexions and Temperaments by *that*, wildly, unreasonably, and uncertainly. I daily find them miserably out in their Conjectures of me, even those who think they best know me. They may frame a general *Air* of my Humour, by a frequent Conversation, but are wonderfully mistaken in their Application, as to the Ends, Inducements, and Motives of most of my Actions.

The most stupid *Soul* that is, will sometimes *work* upon herself, review her own Thoughts and Inclinations, and would delight to be more conversant in this Exercise, if we did not interrupt her Meditation by the Proposal of external Objects, which do not at all concern her. It is the best Acquaintance we can have, and would deal more faithfully and wisely in her Advise-ments, than the best Friend we know upon Earth. It is, I am confident, the Want of this Intelligence that occasions all the Irregularities and Disorders we are *guilty of*. Remember to make *Reason* and *Conscience* of your *Party*, and you will soon perceive your Anxiety and Torment abated. Then should we not only be *wise*, but in a great Measure *happy* to boot; and for ought I know, in as high a Degree as human Nature is capable of attaining. For the greatest Part of our *Felicity*, as I take it, in this Life, is placed in a due Management of our Afflictions, or the intire *Dominion* and *Monarchy* of Reason over our *Passions*. It is a prejudicate Opinion, begot by *Example*, fomented by *Education*, and inveterate  
by



by *Custom*, which has infected our Minds, and debauched our Palates, that we can relish nothing according to its true and natural *Taste*. For the Objects we converse with, have, for the most Part, an *indifferent* Inclination to *Good* or *Evil*, and operate upon us only after the Judgment we make of them. We are *Masters* of every Thing before us, and a wise Man hath an admirable *Dexterity* of drawing *Sweetness* from what *others* call a *Calamity*; and makes all the Injuries of Fortune serve his Designs, and further his Advancement. They are generally Men of weak Spirits, who are dejected with *Adversity*, or exalted with *Prosperity*; and who is either Way affected with these Things, gives a strong Argument of his *Imbecility*, that he knows not how to live agreeable to either *Nature* or *Reason*. Will any Man Glory in another Man's Excellencies, and value himself because his Neighbour has a House better furnished than his own? The Case is the same. Whatever is in the Power of *Fortune*, belongs not to us. We ought no more to be concerned at her Contempts, than elevated with her Favours. She is a capricious *Goddeß*, and the Frailty of Mankind is the Subject of her Humour. She swells a *Bubble* with *Pride*, and breaks it with *Scorn*. Whoever trusts her, does but treasure up to himself an abundant and *inexplicable* Matter of Discontent and Perturbation.

I could, in some Fits of contemplative Melancholy, fall asleep as soon in a Church-Yard as on my Bed; and am often so weary of dull Life, that my greatest Delight is in such *Objects* as speak most to its *Advantage*.

I know that I carry a *Ghost* always about me, and that I myself am a *walking Spirit*. This Thought allays in me those vulgar *Fears* of the Haunts and Visits of *Spectres*; and as I am not at all afraid of myself, so I am very little apprehensive of *Apparitions*:

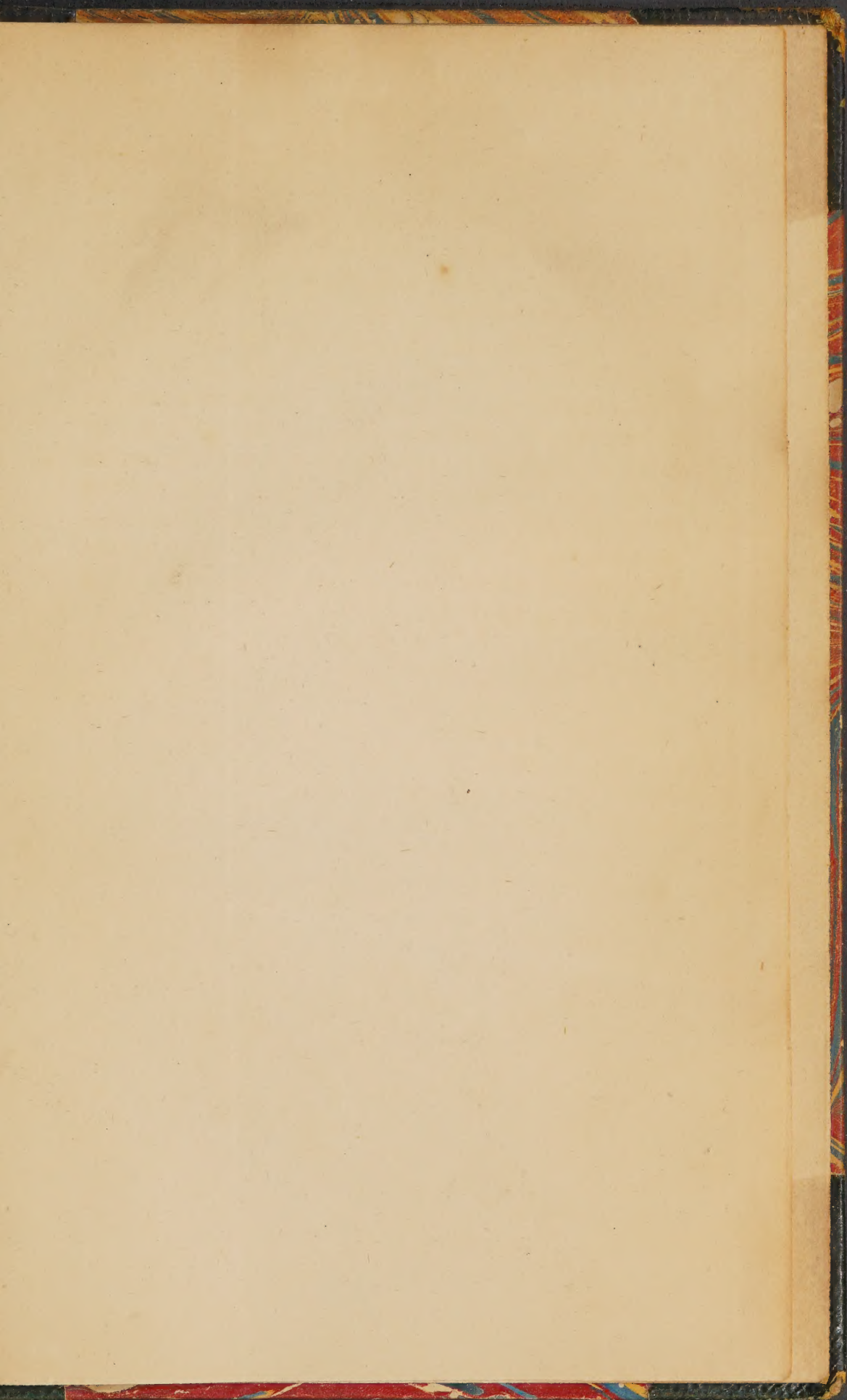
*tions* : Nay more, I could wish the *Communications* more frequent between *us* and the *Inhabitants* of the *upper World* : It would harden our *Christian Courage*, familiarize to us the Thoughts of *Separation*, and create in us a more passionate Love of the *Heavenly Country*.

No eager Pursuit, or restless intemperate Desire of Wealth or Honour, must be harboured by *us*, who are to fix our whole Hopes on *another Country*; and we should confess ourselves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* on this Earth, by the Precepts and Examples of all the *holy Prophets* and *Apostles* throughout the whole Book of God. To set any extraordinary *Value on the World*, is to unravel the peculiar Principle of *Christianity*, and run retrograde to the Steps of the *Holy Jesus*.

F I N I S.







Allen. e/sa. bay. e/su.



1806451



